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WITHDRAWN

LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

XXII

ESSAYS, LETTERS, AND MISCELLANIES

VOLUME II

College of the Pacific
Stockton, Calif.

Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi

THE NOVELS AND OTHER WORKS OF

LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

ESSAYS, LETTERS MISCELLANIES

VOLUME II

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NOBEL'S BEQUEST

A LETTER ADDRESSED TO A SWEDISH EDITOR

THERE has lately appeared in the papers information that in connection with Nobel's will the question has been discussed as to who should be chosen to receive the £10,000 bequeathed to the person who has best served the cause of peace. This has called forth certain considerations in me, and you will greatly oblige me by publishing them in your paper.

I think this point in Nobel's will concerning those who have best served the cause of peace is very difficult. Those who do indeed serve this cause do so because they serve God, and are therefore not in need of pecuniary recompense, and will not accept it. But I think the condition expressed in the will would be quite correctly fulfilled if the money were transmitted to the destitute and suffering families of those who have served the cause of peace.

I am alluding to the Caucasian Dukhobors or Spirit-Wrestlers. No one in our time has served, and is continuing to serve, the cause of peace more effectively and powerfully than these people.

Their service of the cause of peace consists in this. A whole population, more than ten thousand persons, having come to the conviction that a Christian cannot be a murderer, decided not to participate in the military service. Thirty-four men who were summoned to enter the service refused to take the oath and serve, for which they have been confined to a penal battalion — one of the most dreadful of punishments. About three

hundred men of the reserve returned their certificates[1] to the authorities, declaring that they could not and would not serve. These three hundred men were incarcerated in the Caucasian prisons, their families being transported from their homes and settled in Tartar and Georgian villages, where they have neither land nor work to live by.

Notwithstanding the admonitions of the authorities, and threats that they and their families will continue to suffer until they consent to fulfil military duties, those who have refused to do so do not change their decision. And their relatives — their fathers, mothers, wives, sisters — not only do not seek to dissuade them from, but encourage them in, this decision. These men say: —

"We are Christians, and therefore cannot consent to be murderers. You may torture and kill us, we cannot hinder that, but we cannot obey you, because we profess that same Christian teaching which you yourself also accept."

These words are very simple, and, so far from being new, it seems strange to repeat them. Nevertheless, these words, spoken in our time and under the conditions in which the Dukhobors find themselves, have a great importance. In our time everybody speaks of peace, and of the means of instituting it. Peace is spoken of by professors, writers, members of Parliament and of peace societies, and these same professors, writers, members of Parliament and of peace societies, when the occasion offers, express patriotic feelings; and when their time comes they quietly enter the ranks of the army, believing that war will cease, not through their efforts, but through somebody else's, and not in their time, but in some time to come.

Priests and pastors preach about peace in their churches, and zealously pray God for it, but they are careful not to tell their flocks that war is incompatible with Christianity. All the emperors, kings, and presidents, traveling from capital to capital, lose no oppor-

[1] Men in the army reserve have certificates showing the position the occupy in the service. — Tr.

tunity to speak of peace. They speak of peace when embracing each other at the railway stations; they speak of peace when receiving deputations and presents; they speak of peace with a glass of wine in their hands, at dinners and suppers; above all they lose no opportunity to speak of peace in front of those same troops which are collected for murder, and of which they boast one before another.

And, therefore, in the midst of this universal falsehood, the conduct of the Dukhobors, who say nothing about peace, but only say that they themselves do not wish to be murderers, has a special significance, because it exhibits to the world that ancient, simple, unerring, and only means of establishing peace long ago revealed to man by Christ, but from which the people of former times were so far off that it seemed impracticable; while in our time it has become so natural that one can only be astonished how it is that all men of the Christian world have not yet adopted it.

This means is simple, because for its application it is not necessary to undertake anything new, but only for each man of our time himself to refrain from doing that which he regards as bad and shameful for himself as well as for others; and not to consent to be the slave of those who prepare men for murder. This means is certain, because, if Christians were only to admit — what they must admit — that a Christian cannot be a murderer, there would then be no soldiers; because all are Christians, and there would be lasting and inviolable peace between them. And this means is the only one, because, as long as Christians will not regard participation in the military service as impossible for themselves, so long will ambitious men involve others in this service, and there will be armies; and if there be armies, there will also be wars.

I know this means has already for long been practised. I know how the ancient Christians who refused the military service were executed by the Romans for doing so (these refusals are described in the lives of the saints). I know how the Paulicians were, every one of

them, destroyed for the same conduct. I know how the Bogomili ,were persecuted, and how the Quakers and Mennonites suffered for this same cause. I know also how, at the present time, in Austria, the Nazarenes are languishing in prisons; and how people have been martyred in Russia.

But the fact that all these martyrdoms have not abolished war in no way proves that they have been useless. To say that this means is not efficacious because it has already been applied for a long time and yet war still exists, is the same as to say that in spring the sun's warmth is not efficacious because the ground has not yet become bare of snow, and flowers have not yet sprung up.

The meaning of these refusals in former times and now is quite different; then they were the first rays of the sun falling on the frozen winter earth, now they are the last touch of warmth necessary to destroy the remains of the seeming winter which has lost its power. And in fact there never was before that which now is; never before was the absurdity so evident that all men, without exception, strong and weak, disposed for war and abhorring it, should be equally obliged to take part in military service; or that the greater part of the national wealth should be spent on continually increasing military preparations; never before was it so clear as in our time that the continual excuse for the gathering and maintenance of armies — the supposed necessity of defense from an imaginary attack of enemies — has no basis in reason, and that all these threats of attack are only the invention of those to whom armies are necessary for their own purpose of maintaining power over the nations.

It has never occurred before, that war threatened man with such dreadful devastations and calamities, and such massacres of whole populations, as it does at the present time. And, lastly, never before have those feelings of unity and good-will among nations owing to which war appears to be something dreadful, immoral, senseless, and fratricidal, been so widely spread. But, above all,

never, as it is now, was the deceit so evident by which some people compel others to prepare for war, burdensome, unnecessary, and abhorrent to all.

It is said that, to destroy war by this means, too much time would have to elapse; that a long process of the union of all men in the one and the same desire to avoid participation in war would have to be gone through. But love of peace and abhorrence of war, like love of health and abhorrence of disease, have long since been the continual and general desire of all men not corrupted, intoxicated, and deluded.

So that, if peace has not yet been established, it is not because there does not exist among men the universal desire for it; it is not because there is no love for peace and abhorrence of war; but only because there exists the cunning deceit by which men have been, and are, persuaded that peace is impossible and war indispensable. And therefore, to establish peace amongst men, first of all amongst Christians, and to abolish war, it is not necessary to inculcate in men anything new; it is only necessary to liberate them from the deceit which has been instilled into them, causing them to act contrary to their general desire. This deceit is being more and more revealed by life itself, and in our time it is so far revealed that only a small effort is necessary in order that men should completely free themselves from it. Precisely this effort the Dukhobors are making in our time by their refusal of the military service.

The conduct of the Dukhobors is tearing off the last covering which hides the truth from man. And the Russian government knows this, and is endeavoring with all its strength to keep up, if only for a time, that deceit upon which its power is founded; and that government is, for this purpose, using the cruel and secret measures usual, in such cases, to those who know their guilt.

The Dukhobors who have refused the military services are confined to penal battalions and exiled to the worst parts of Siberia and the Caucasus; while their families — old men, children, wives — are driven out of

their dwellings and settled in localities where, homeless and without means of earning their food, they are gradually dying out from want and disease. And all this is being done in the greatest secrecy. Those incarcerated in prisons, and those who are being exiled, are kept separate from every one else; the exiled are not allowed to communicate with Russians, they are kept exclusively among non-Russian tribes, true information concerning the Dukhobors is forbidden in the press, letters from them are not forwarded, letters to them do not reach them, special police guard against any communication between the Dukhobors and Russians, forbidding it; and those who have endeavored to help the Dukhobors, and spread information about them among the public, have been banished to distant places or else altogether exiled from Russia. And, as is always the case, these measures only produce the reverse result to that which the government desires.

In our time it is impossible unperceived to sweep off the face of the earth a religious, moral, and industrious population of ten thousand souls. Those same people, soldiers and jailers, who guard the Dukhobors, those tribes amongst whom they are dispersed, also those individuals who, notwithstanding all the efforts of the government, communicate with the Dukhobors, — all these discover that for which, and in the name of which, the Dukhobors are suffering; they find out the utterly inexcusable cruelty of the government and its fear of publicity; and men who formerly never doubted the lawfulness of the government and compatibility of Christianity with the military service, not only begin to have doubts, but are becoming completely persuaded of the rightness of the Dukhobors, and of the falsity of the government, and are liberating themselves and others from the deceit which has held them up to this time.

And it is this liberation from deceit and consequent approach toward the effectual establishment of peace on earth which to-day constitutes the great worth of the Dukhobors.

This is why I believe that no one has served the cause of peace in a greater degree than they have. The dreadful condition in which their families at present find themselves[1] justifies one in affirming that no one can with greater justice be awarded the money which Nobel bequeathed to those that have best served the cause of peace.

[1] Information concerning them can be found in a book lately published in English, entitled, "Christian Martyrdom in Russia." It is edited by Vladimir Tcherkof, with concluding chapter and letter by Count Tolstoi. — Ed.

November, 1897.

LETTER TO ERNEST HOWARD CROSBY

I AM very glad to have news of your activity, and to hear that your work begins to attract attention. Fifty years ago Lloyd Garrison's Declaration of Non-resistance only estranged people from him; and Ballou's fifty years' labor in the same direction was constantly met by a conspiracy of silence. I now read with great pleasure, in the *Voice*, admirable thoughts by American writers on this question of non-resistance. I need only demur to the notion expressed by Mr. Bemis. It is an old but unfounded libel upon Christ to suppose that the expulsion of the cattle from the temple indicates that Jesus beat people with a whip, and advised His disciples to behave in a like manner.[1] The opinions expressed by these writers, especially by Heber Newton and George D. Herron, are quite correct; but unfortunately they do not reply to the problem which Christ put to men, but to another, which has been substituted for it by those chief and most dangerous opponents of Christianity, the so-called "orthodox" ecclesiastical authorities.

Mr. Higginson says: "I do not believe non-resistance admissible as a universal rule." Heber Newton says that people's opinion as to the practical result of the application of Christ's teaching will depend on the extent of people's belief in His authority. Carlos Martyn considers the transition stage in which we live not suited for the application of the doctrine of non-resistance. George D. Herron holds that to obey the law of non-

[1] See our Revised Version of John ii. 15, which, as amended in translation, clearly shows that Jesus used the scourge only for "both the sheep and the oxen." — ED.

resistance we must learn how to apply it to life. Mrs. Livermore, thinking that the law of non-resistance can be fully obeyed only in the future, says the same. All these views refer to the question, "What would happen if people were all obliged to obey the law of non-resistance?"

But, in the first place, it is impossible to oblige every one to accept the law of non-resistance. Secondly, if it were possible to do so, such compulsion would in itself be a direct negation of the very principle set up. Oblige all men to refrain from violence? Who then should enforce the decision? Thirdly, and this is the chief point, the question, as put by Christ, is not at all, "Can non-resistance become a general law for humanity?" but, "How must each man act to fulfil his allotted task, to save his soul, and to do the will of God, three things which are really one and the same thing?"

Christian teaching does not lay down laws for everybody, and does not say to people, "You all, for fear of punishment, must obey such and such rules, and then you will all be happy"; but it explains to each individual his position in relation to the world, and gives him to see what results, for him individually, inevitably flow from that relation. Christianity says to mankind (and to each man separately), that a man's personal life can have no rational meaning if he counts it as belonging to himself or as having for its aim worldly happiness for himself or for other people. This is so, because the happiness he seeks is unattainable—(1) for the reason that, all beings striving after worldly advantages, the gain of one is the loss of others, and it is most probable that each individual will incur much superfluous suffering in the course of his vain effort to seize unattainable blessings; (2) because, even if a man gains worldly advantages, the more he obtains the less he is satisfied, and the more he hankers after fresh ones; (3) and chiefly because the longer a man lives the more irresistible becomes the approach of old age, sickness, death, destroying all possibility of worldly advantages. So that if man considers his life to be his own, to be spent in

seeking worldly happiness for himself as well as for others, then that life can have no rational explanation for him. Life takes a rational meaning only when one understands that, to consider our life our own, or to see its aim in worldly happiness for ourselves or for other people, is a delusion; that a man's life does not belong to him who has received it, but to Him who has given it; and therefore its object should be, not the attainment of worldly happiness, either for one's self or for other individuals, but solely to fulfil the will of Him, the Creator of this life.

This conception alone gives life a rational meaning, and makes life's aim (which is to fulfil the will of God) attainable. And, most important of all, only when enlightened by this conception does man see clearly the right direction for his own activity. Man is then no longer destined to suffer and to despair, as was inevitable under the former conception. "The universe and I in it," says a man of this conception to himself, "exist by the will of God. I cannot know the whole of the universe, for in immensity it transcends my comprehension; nor can I know my own position in it; but I do know with certainty what God, who has sent me into this world, infinite in time and space, and therefore incomprehensible to me, demands from me. This is revealed to me (1) by the collective wisdom of the best men who have gone before me, *i.e.* by tradition; (2) by my own reason; and (3) by my heart, *i.e.* by the highest aspirations of my nature.

Tradition — the collective wisdom of my greatest forerunners — tells me that I should do unto others as I would that they should do unto me. My reason shows me that only by all men acting thus is the highest happiness for all men attainable. Only when I yield myself to that intuition of love which demands obedience to this law is my own heart happy and at rest. And not only can I then know how to act, but I can and do discern that work, to coöperate in which my activity was designed and is required. I cannot fathom God's whole design, for the sake of which the universe exists and

lives; but the divine work which is being accomplished in this world, and in which I participate by living, is comprehensible to me.

This work is the annihilation of discord and strife among men, and among all creatures; and the establishment of the highest unity, concord, and love. It is the fulfilment of the promises of the Hebrew prophets, who foretold a time when all men should be taught by truth, when spears should be turned into reaping-hooks, swords be beaten to plowshares, and the lion lie down with the lamb. So that a man of Christian intelligence not only knows what he has to do, but he also understands the work he is doing. He has to act so as to coöperate toward the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. For this, a man must obey his intuition of God's will, *i.e.* he must act lovingly toward others, as he would that others should act toward him. Thus the intuitive demands of man's soul coincide with the external aim of life which he sees before him.

Man in this world, according to Christian teaching, is God's laborer. A laborer does not know his master's whole design, but he does know the immediate object which he is set to work at. He receives definite instructions what to do, and especially what not to do, lest he hinder the attainment of the very ends toward which his labor must tend. For the rest he has full liberty given him. And therefore, for a man who has grasped the Christian conception of life, the meaning of his life is perfectly plain and reasonable; nor can he have a moment's hesitation as to how he should act, or what he should do to fulfil the object for which he lives.

And yet, in spite of such a twofold indication, clear and indubitable to a man of Christian understanding of what is the real aim and meaning of human life, and of what men should do and should not do, we find people (and people calling themselves Christians) who decide that in such and such circumstances men ought to abandon God's law and reason's guidance, and act in opposition to them; because, according to their conception,

the effects of actions performed in submission to God's law may be detrimental or inconvenient.

According to the law, contained alike in tradition, in our reason, and in our hearts, man should always do unto others as he would that they should do unto him; he should always coöperate in the development of love and union among created beings. But on the contrary, in the judgment of these people who look ahead, as long as it is premature, in their opinion, to obey this law, man should do violence, imprison or kill people, and thereby evoke anger and venom instead of loving union in the hearts of men. It is as if a bricklayer, set to do a particular task, and knowing that he was coöperating with others to build a house, after receiving clear and precise instructions from the master himself how to build a certain wall, should receive from some fellow bricklayers (who like himself knew neither the plan of the house nor what would fit in with it) orders to cease building his wall, and instead rather to pull down a wall which other workmen had erected.

Astonishing delusion! A being who breathes one day and vanishes the next receives one definite, indubitable law to guide him through the brief term of his life; but instead of obeying that law he prefers to fancy that he knows what is necessary, advantageous, and well-timed for men, for all the world — this world which continually shifts and evolves; and for the sake of some advantage (which each man pictures after his own fancy) he decides that he and other people should temporarily abandon the indubitable law given to one and to all, and should act, not as they would that others should act toward them, bringing love into the world, but instead do violence, imprison, kill, and bring into the world enmity whenever it seems profitable to do so. And he decides to act thus, though he knows that the most horrible cruelties, martyrdoms, and murders — from the inquisitions, and the murders, and horrors of all the revolutions, down to the violences of contemporary anarchists, and their slaughter by the established authorities — have only occurred because people will

imagine that they know what are necessary for mankind and for the world. But are there not always, at any given moment, two opposite parties, each of which declares that it is necessary to use force against the other — the "law and order" party against the "anarchist"; the "anarchist" against the "law and order" men; English against Americans, and Americans against English; Germans against English, and English against Germans; and so forth in all possible combinations and rearrangements?

A man enlightened by Christianity sees that he has no reason to abandon the law of God, given to enable him to walk with sure foot through life, in order to follow the chance, inconstant, and often contradictory demands of men. But besides this, if he has lived a Christian life for some time, and has developed in himself a Christian moral sensibility, he literally cannot act as people demand of him. Not this reason only, but his feeling also, makes it impossible. To many people of our society it would be impossible to torture or kill a baby, even if they were told that by so doing they could save hundreds of people. And in the same way a man, when he has developed a Christian sensibility of heart, finds a whole series of actions are become impossible for him. For instance, a Christian who is obliged to take part in judicial proceedings in which a man may be sentenced to death, or who is obliged to take part in evictions, or in debating a proposal leading to war, or to participate in preparations for war (not to mention war itself), is in a position parallel to that of a kindly man called on to torture or to kill a baby. It is not reason alone that forbids him to do what is demanded of him; he feels instinctively that he cannot do it. For certain actions are morally impossible, just as others are physically impossible. As a man cannot lift a mountain, and as a kindly man cannot kill an infant, so a man living the Christian life cannot take part in deeds of violence. Of what value then to him are arguments about the imaginary advantages of doing what is morally impossible for him to do?

But how is a man to act when he sees clearly an evil in following the law of love and its corollary law of non-resistance? How (to use the stock example) is a man to act when he sees a criminal killing or outraging a child, and he can only save the child by killing the criminal? When such a case is put, it is generally assumed that the only possible reply is that one should kill the assailant to save the child. But this answer is given so quickly and decidedly only because we are all so accustomed to the use of violence, not only to save a child, but even to prevent a neighboring government altering its frontier at the expense of ours, or to prevent some one from smuggling lace across that frontier, or even to defend our garden fruit from a passer-by. It is assumed that to save the child the assailant should be killed.

But it is only necessary to consider the question, "On what grounds ought a man, whether he be or be not a Christian, to act so?" in order to come to the conclusion that such action has no reasonable foundation, and only seems to us necessary because up to two thousand years ago such conduct was considered right, and a habit of acting so had been formed. Why should a non-Christian, not acknowledging God, and not regarding the fulfilment of His will as the aim of life, decide to kill the criminal in order to defend the child? By killing the former he kills for certain; whereas he cannot know positively whether the criminal would have killed the child or not. But letting that pass, who shall say whether the child's life was more needed, was better, than the other's life? Surely, if the non-Christian knows not God, and does not see life's meaning to be in the performance of His will, the only rule for his actions must be a reckoning, a conception, of which is more profitable for him and for all men, a continuation of the criminal's life or of the child's. To decide that, he needs to know what would become of the child whom he saves, and what, had he not killed him, would have been the future of the assailant. And as he cannot know this, the non-Christian has no sufficient rational ground for killing a robber to save a child.

If a man be a Christian, and consequently acknowledges God, and sees the meaning of life in fulfilling His will, then, however ferocious the assailant, however innocent and lovely the child, he has even less ground to abandon the God-given law, and to do to the criminal as the criminal wishes to do to the child. He may plead with the assailant, may interpose his own body between the assailant and the victim; but there is one thing he cannot do — he cannot deliberately abandon the law he has received from God, the fulfilment of which alone gives meaning to his life. Very probably bad education, or his animal nature, may cause a man, Christian or non-Christian, to kill an assailant, not to save a child, but even to save himself or to save his purse. But it does not follow that he is right in acting thus, or that he should accustom himself or others to think such conduct right. What it does show is that, notwithstanding a coating of education and of Christianity, the habits of the stone age are yet so strong in man that he still commits actions long since condemned by his reasonable conscience.

I see a criminal killing a child, and I can save the child by killing the assailant — therefore, in certain cases, violence must be used to resist evil. A man's life is in danger, and can be saved only by my telling a lie — therefore, in certain cases, one must lie. A man is starving, and I can only save him by stealing — therefore, in certain cases, one must steal. I lately read a story by Coppée, in which an orderly kills his officer, whose life was insured, and thereby saves the honor and the family of the officer, the moral being that, in certain cases, one must kill. Such devices, and the deductions from them, only prove that there are men who know that it is not well to steal, to lie, or to kill, but who are still so unwilling that people should cease to do these things that they use all their mental powers to invent excuses for such conduct. There is no moral law concerning which one might not devise a case in which it is difficult to decide which is more moral, to disobey the law or to obey it? But all such devices fail to

prove that the laws, "Thou shalt not lie, steal, or kill," are invalid.

It is thus with the law of non-resistance. People know it is wrong to use violence, but they are so anxious to continue to live a life secured by "the strong arm of the law," that, instead of devoting their intellects to the elucidation of the evils which have flowed, and are still flowing, from admitting that man has a right to use violence to his fellow-men, they prefer to exert their mental powers in defense of that error. "*Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra*" — "Do what's right, come what may" — is an expression of profound wisdom. We each can know indubitably what we ought to do, but what results will follow from our actions we none of us either do or can know. Therefore it follows that, besides feeling the call of duty, we are further driven to act as duty bids us by the consideration that we have no other guidance, but are totally ignorant of what will result from our action.

Christian teaching indicates what a man should do to perform the will of Him who sent him into life; and discussion as to what results we anticipate from such or such human actions have nothing to do with Christianity, but are just an example of the error which Christianity eliminates. None of us has ever yet met the imaginary criminal with the imaginary child, but all the horrors which fill the annals of history and of our own times came, and come, from this one thing, namely, that people will believe they really foresee speculative future results of actions.

The case is this. People once lived an animal life, and violated or killed whom they thought well to violate or to kill. They even ate one another, and public opinion approved of it. Thousands of years ago, as far back as the times of Moses, a day came when people had realized that to violate or kill one another is bad. But there were people for whom the reign of force was advantageous, and these did not approve of the change, but assured themselves and others that to do deeds of violence and to kill people is not always bad, but that there

are circumstances when it is necessary and even moral. And violence and slaughter, though not so frequent or so cruel as before, continued, only with this difference, that those who committed or commended such acts excused themselves by pleading that they did it for the benefit of humanity.

It was just this sophistical justification of violence that Christ denounced. When two enemies fight, each may think his own conduct justified by the circumstances. Excuses can be made for every use of violence, and no infallible standard has ever been discovered by which to measure the worth of these excuses. Therefore Christ taught us to disbelieve in any excuse for violence, and (contrary to what had been taught by them of old times) never to use violence. One would have thought that those who have professed Christianity would be indefatigable in exposing deception in this matter; for in such exposure lay one of the chief manifestations of Christianity. What really happened was just the reverse. People who profited by violence, and who did not wish to give up their advantages, took on themselves a monopoly of Christian preaching, and declared that, as cases can be found in which non-resistance causes more harm than the use of violence (the imaginary criminal killing the imaginary child), therefore Christ's doctrine of non-resistance need not always be followed; and that one may deviate from His teaching to defend one's life or the life of others; or to defend one's country, to save society from lunatics or criminals, and in many other cases.

The decision of the question in what cases Christ's teaching should be set aside was left to the very people who employed violence. So that it ended by Christ's teaching on the subject of not resisting evil by violence being completely annulled. And what was worst of all was that the very people Christ denounced came to consider themselves the sole preachers and expositors of His doctrines. But the light shines through the darkness, and Christ's teaching is again exposing the pseudo-teachers of Christianity. We may think about rearrang-

ing the world to suit our own taste — no one can prevent that; and we may try to do what seems to us pleasant or profitable, and with that object treat our fellow creatures with violence on the pretext that we are doing good. But so acting we cannot pretend that we follow Christ's teaching, for Christ denounced just this deception. Truth sooner or later reappears, and the false teachers are shown up, which is just what is happening to-day.

Only let the question of man's life be rightly put, as Christ put it, and not as it has been perversely put by the Church, and the whole structure of falsehood which the Church has built over Christ's teaching will collapse of itself. The real question is not whether it will be good or bad for a certain human society that people should follow the law of love and the consequent law of non-resistance. But it is this: Do you, who to-day live and to-morrow will die, you who are indeed tending deathward every moment, do you wish now, immediately and entirely, to obey the law of Him who sent you into life, and who clearly showed you His will, alike in tradition and in your mind and heart; or do you prefer to resist His will? And as soon as the question is put thus, only one reply is possible: I wish now, this moment, without delay or hesitation, to the very utmost of my strength, neither waiting for any one or counting the cost, to do that which alone is clearly demanded by Him who sent me into the world; and on no account, and under no conditions, do I wish to, or can I, act otherwise — for herein lies my only possibility of a rational and unharassed life.

PATRIOTISM, OR PEACE?

[The following letter, called forth by the dispute about Venezuela between the United States and England, was written by Count Tolstoï to an English correspondent, and first appeared in the *Daily Chronicle of* March 17, 1896.]

YOU write asking me to state my opinion on the case between the United States and England, "in the cause of Christian consistency and true peace," and you express the hope "that the nations may soon be awakened to the only means of insuring international peace."

I entertain the same hope; and for this reason. The complication which, in our time, involves the nations: exalting patriotism as they do, educating the young generation in that superstition, and at the same time shirking that inevitable consequence of patriotism, war,— has, it seems to me, reached that last degree at which the very simplest consideration, such as suggests itself to every unbiased person, may suffice to show to men the extreme contradiction in which they are placed.

Often, when one asks children which they choose of two incompatible but eagerly desired things, they will answer, "Both." "Which do you wish — to go for a drive, or to play at home?" "To go for a drive and to play at home."

Exactly so with the Christian nations, when life itself puts the question to them, "Which do you choose — patriotism or peace?" They answer, "Patriotism and peace." And yet to combine patriotism and peace is just as impossible as to go for a drive and to stay at home at one and the same time.

The other day a conflict arose between the United States and England over the frontier of Venezuela. Salisbury did not agree to something; Cleveland wrote a message to the Senate; patriotic, warlike cries were raised on both sides; a panic occurred on 'Change; people lost millions of pounds and dollars; Edison said he was devising machines to kill more men in an hour than were killed by Attila in all his wars; and both nations began to make energetic preparations for war.

But, together with these preparations for war, alike in England and America, various writers, princes, and statesmen began to counsel the governments of both nations to keep from war, insisting that the matter in dispute was not sufficiently serious for war, especially as between two Anglo-Saxon nations, peoples of one language, who ought not to go to war with each other, but ought rather in amity together to domineer over others. Whether because of this, or because all kinds of bishops, clergymen, and ministers prayed and preached over the matter in their churches, or because both sides considered they were not yet ready; for one cause or another, it has turned out there is to be no war this time. And people have calmed down.

But one would have too little penetration not to see that the causes which have thus led to dispute between England and the States still remain the same; that if the present difficulty is settled without war, yet, inevitably, to-morrow or next day, disputes must arise between England and the States, between England and Germany, England and Russia, England and Turkey, disputes in all possible combinations. Such arise daily; and one or other of them will surely bring war.

For, if there live side by side two armed men, who have from childhood been taught that power, riches, and glory are the highest goods, and that to obtain these by arms, to the loss of one's neighbors, is a most praiseworthy thing; and if, further, there is for these men no moral, religious, or political bond, — then is it not clear that they will always seek war, that their normal relations will be warlike, and that having once caught each

other by the throat, they separate again only, as the French proverb has it, *pour mieux sauter*, — they draw back to take a better spring, to rush upon each other with more ferocity?

The egoism of the individual is terrible. But the egoists of private life are not armed; they do not count it good to prepare, or to use, arms against their competitors; their egoism is controlled by the powers of the state and of public opinion. A private person who should, arm in hand, deprive his neighbor of a cow or an acre of field would be at once seized by the police and imprisoned. Moreover, he would be condemned by public opinion, called a thief and a robber. Quite otherwise with states. All are armed. Influence over them there is none; more than those absurd attempts to catch a bird by sprinkling salt on its tail, such as are the efforts to establish international congresses, which armed states (armed, forsooth, that they may be above taking advice) will clearly never accept. And above all, the public opinion which punishes every violent act of the private individual, praises, exalts as the virtue of patriotism, every appropriation of other people's property made with a view of increasing the power of one's own country.

Open the newspapers on any day you like, and you will always see, every moment, some black spot, a possible cause for war. Now it is Korea; again the Pamirs, Africa, Abyssinia, Armenia, Turkey, Venezuela, or the Transvaal. The work of robbery ceases not for an instant; now here, now there, some small war is going on incessantly, like the exchange of shots in the first line; and a great real war may, must, begin at some moment.

If the American desires the greatness and prosperity of the States before all nations, and the Englishman desires the same for his nation, and the Russian, Turk, Dutchman, Abyssinian, Venezuelan, Boer, Armenian, Pole, Czech, each have a similar desire; if all are convinced that these desires ought not to be concealed and suppressed, but, on the contrary, are something to be proud of, and to be encouraged in oneself and in others;

and if one's country's greatness and prosperity can be obtained only at the expense of another, or at times of many other countries and nations, — then how can war not be?

Obviously, to avoid war, it is necessary, not to preach sermons and pray God for peace, not to adjure the English-speaking nations to live in peace together in order to domineer over other nations, not to make double and triple counter-alliances, not to intermarry princes and princesses, but to destroy the root of war. And that is, the exclusive desire for the well-being of one's own people; it is patriotism. Therefore, to destroy war, destroy patriotism. But to destroy patriotism, it is first necessary to produce conviction that it is an evil; and that is difficult to do. Tell people that war is an evil, and they will laugh; for who does not know it? Tell them that patriotism is an evil, and most of them will agree, but with a reservation. "Yes," they will say, "wrong patriotism is an evil; but there is another kind, the kind we hold." But just what this good patriotism is, no one explains. If good patriotism consists in inaggressiveness, as many say, still all patriotism, even if not aggressive, is necessarily retentive; that is, people wish to keep what they have previously conquered. The nation does not exist which was founded without conquest; and conquest can only be retained by the means which achieved it — namely, violence, murder. But if patriotism be not even retentive, it is then the restoring patriotism of conquered and oppressed nations, of Armenians, Poles, Czechs, Irish, and so on. And this patriotism is about the very worst; for it is the most embittered and the most provocative of violence.

Patriotism cannot be good. Why do not people say that egoism may be good? For this might more easily be maintained as to egoism, which is a natural and inborn feeling, than as to patriotism, which is an unnatural feeling, artificially grafted on man.

It will be said, "Patriotism has welded mankind into states, and maintains the unity of states." But men are now united in states; that work is done; why now

maintain exclusive devotion to one's own state, when this produces terrible evils for all states and nations? For this same patriotism which welded mankind into states is now destroying those same states. If there were but one patriotism — say of the English only — then it were possible to regard that as conciliatory, or beneficent. But when, as now, there is American patriotism, English, German, French, Russian, all opposed to one another, in this event, patriotism no longer unites, but disunites. To say that patriotism was beneficent, unifying the states, when it flourished in Greece and Rome, and that it is also similarly and equally beneficent now, after eighteen centuries of life under Christianity, is as much as to say that, because plowing was useful and good for the field before the sowing, it is equally so now, when the crop has come up.

It might, indeed, be well to let patriotism survive, in memory of the benefits it once brought, in the way we have preserved ancient monuments, like temples, tombs, and so on. But temples and tombs endure without causing any harm; while patriotism ceases not to inflict incalculable woes.

Why are Armenians and Turks now agitated, being massacred, becoming like wild beasts? Why are England and Russia, each anxious for its own share of the inheritance from Turkey, waiting upon, and not ending, these butcheries of Armenians? Why are Abyssinians and Italians being massacred? Why was a terrible war within an ace of outbreak over Venezuela; and since, another over the Transvaal? And the Chino-Japanese war, the Russo-Turkish, the Franco-German? And the bitterness of conquered nations: Armenians, Poles, Irish? And the preparations for a war of all nations? All this is the fruit of patriotism. Seas of blood have been shed over this passion; and will yet be shed for it, unless people free themselves of this obsolete relic of antiquity.

Several times now I have had occasion to write about patriotism; about its entire incompatibility, not only with the truly understood teaching of Christ, but with the very lowest demands of morality in a Christian

society. Each time my arguments have been met either with silence, or with a lofty suggestion that my ideas, as expressed, are Utopian utterances of mysticism, anarchism, and cosmopolitanism. Often my ideas are summed up, and then, instead of counter-arguments, the remark only is added, that "this is nothing less than cosmopolitanism!" As if this word, cosmopolitanism, had indisputably refuted all my arguments.

Men who are serious, mature, clever, kind, and who — this is the most important matter — stand like a city on a mountain top; men who by their example involuntarily lead the masses; such men assume that the legitimacy and beneficence of patriotism are so far evident and certain, that it is not worth while answering the frivolous and foolish attacks on the sacred feeling. And the majority of people, misled from childhood, and infected with patriotism, accept this lofty silence as the most convincing argument; and they continue to walk in the darkness of ignorance.

Those who, from their position, can help to free the masses from their sufferings, and do not do so, commit a vast sin.

The most fearful evil in the world is hypocrisy. Not in vain did Christ, once only, show anger; and that against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

But what was the Pharisaic hypocrisy compared with the hypocrisy of our own time? In comparison with our hypocrites, those among the Pharisees were the justest of men; and their art of hypocrisy was child's play, beside ours. It cannot be otherwise. All our lives, with their profession of Christianity, of the doctrine of humility and love, lived in an armed robber camp, cannot be other than one unbroken, frightful hypocrisy. It is very convenient to profess a doctrine which has, at one end, Christian holiness and consequent infallibility, and at the other end, the heathen sword and gallows; so that, when it is possible to deceive and impose by holiness, holiness is brought in play, while, when the deceit fails, the sword and gallows are set to work. Such a doctrine is very con-

venient. But a time comes when the cobweb of lies gives way, and it is no longer possible to keep up both ends; one or other has to go. This is about to happen with the doctrine of patriotism.

Whether people wish it or do not wish it, the question stands clear to mankind, *How can this patriotism, whence come human sufferings incalculable, sufferings both physical and moral, be necessary, and be a virtue?* This question, of compulsion, must be answered.

It is needful, either to show that patriotism is so beneficent that it redeems all those terrible sufferings which it causes to mankind; or else, to acknowledge that patriotism is an evil, which, instead of being grafted upon and suggested to people, should be struggled against with all one's might, to escape from it.

C'est à prendre ou à laisser, as the French say. If patriotism be good, then Christianity, as giving peace, is an idle dream, and the sooner we root it out, the better. But if Christianity really gives peace, and if we really want peace, then patriotism is a survival of barbarism, and it is not only wrong to excite and develop it, as we do now, but it ought to be rooted out by every means, by preaching, persuasion, contempt, ridicule. If Christianity be truth, and we wish to live in peace, then must we more than cease to take pleasure in the power of our country; we must rejoice in the weakening of that power, and help thereto.

A Russian should rejoice if Poland, the Baltic Provinces, Finland, Armenia, should be separated, freed, from Russia; so with an Englishman in regard to Ireland, India, and other possessions; and each should help to this, because, the greater the state, the more wrong and cruel is its patriotism, and the greater is the sum of suffering upon which its power is founded. Therefore, if we really wish to be what we profess to be, we must not only cease our present desire for the growth of our state, but we must desire its decrease, its weakening, and help this forward with all our might. And in this way we must train the rising generation; we must educate them so that, just as

now a young man is ashamed to show his rude egoism by eating everything and leaving nothing for others, by pushing the weak out of the way that he may pass himself, by forcibly taking that which another needs: so he may then be equally ashamed of desiring increased power for his own country; and so that, just as it is now considered stupid, foolish, to praise oneself, it shall then be seen to be equally foolish to praise one's own nation, as it is now done in divers of the best national histories, pictures, monuments, text-books, articles, verses, sermons, and silly national hymns. It must be understood that, as long as we praise patriotism, and cultivate it in the young, so long will there be armaments to destroy the physical and spiritual life of nations; and wars, vast, awful wars, such as we are preparing for, and into the circle of which we are drawing, debauching them in our patriotism, the new and to be dreaded combatants of the far East.

The Emperor Wilhelm, one of the most absurd personages of our time, — orator, poet, musician, dramatist, and painter, chief of all, patriot, — lately had made a sketch representing all the nations of Europe, standing, with drawn swords, on the sea-shore; there, under direction of the Archangel Michael, gazing at figures of Buddha and Confucius, seated in the distance. In Wilhelm's intention, this denotes that the nations of Europe must unite, to oppose the danger moving upon them from the quarter shown. And he is perfectly right; that is, from his pagan, gross, patriotic point of view, obsolete these eighteen hundred years.

The European nations, forgetful of Christ for the sake of patriotism, have ever more and more excited and incited these peaceful peoples to patriotism; and now have roused them to such a degree that really, if only Japan and China as completely forget the teaching of Buddha and Confucius as we have forgotten the teaching of Christ, they would soon master the art of killing (soon learned, as Japan has shown); and being brave, skilful, strong, and numerous, they would inevitably do with Europe what the European countries are

doing with Africa; unless Europe can oppose to them something stronger than armaments and Edisonian devices. "The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master."

To the question of a petty king, as to how many men, and in what way, he should add to his troops, in order to conquer a southern tribe which refused submission to him, Confucius replied, "Disband all your army, use what you now spend on troops for the education of your people, and for the improvement of agriculture; and the southern tribe will expel its king, and, without war, submit to thy authority."

Thus taught Confucius, whom we are counseled to fear.

And we, having forgotten the teaching of Christ, having renounced him, wish to subdue nations by violence; thereby only to prepare for ourselves new enemies, still more powerful than our present neighbors.

A friend of mine, having seen Wilhelm's picture, said: "The picture is excellent, only it does not at all signify what is written below. It really shows the Archangel Michael pointing out to all the governments of Europe, represented as brigands hung round with arms, that which is to destroy, annihilate them; namely, the meekness of Buddha and the reasonableness of Confucius." He might have added, "and the humility of Lao-Tse." And indeed we, in our hypocrisy, have so far forgotten Christ, and corroded out of our lives all that is Christian, that the teachings of Buddha and Confucius rise incomparably higher than that bestial patriotism which guides our pseudo-Christian nations.

The salvation of Europe, of the whole Christian world, comes not by being girt with swords, like brigands, as in Wilhelm's picture; not by rushing across seas to kill our brethren: but, oppositely, by casting off that survival of barbarism, patriotism; and having renounced it, by disarming; showing the Oriental nations an example, not of savage patriotism and ferocity, but that one of brotherly life which has been taught to us by Christ.

LETTER ON THE PEACE CONFERENCE

THE opinion expressed in your estimable letter, that the easiest and surest way to universal disarmament is by individuals refusing to take part in military service, is most just. I am even of opinion that this is the only way to escape from the terrible and ever increasing miseries of wardom (militarism). But your opinion that at the Conference which is about to assemble at the Tsar's invitation, the question should be debated whether men who refuse military service may not be employed on public works instead, appears to me quite mistaken — in the first place, because the Conference itself can be nothing but one of those hypocritical arrangements which aim not at peace, but, on the contrary, at hiding from men the one means of obtaining universal peace, which the most advanced men begin to discern.

The Conference, it is said, will aim, if not at disarmament, then at checking the increase of armaments. It is supposed that at this Conference the representatives of governments will agree to cease increasing their forces. If so, the question involuntarily presents itself: How will the governments of those countries act which at the time of this meeting happen to be weaker than their neighbors? Such governments will hardly agree to remain in that condition — weaker than their neighbors. Or, if they have such firm belief in the validity of the stipulations made by the Conference as to agree to remain weaker, why should they not be weaker still? Why spend money on an army at all?

If, again, the business of the Conference will be to equalize the fighting forces of the various states, and

to keep them stationary, then, even could such an impossible balance be arrived at, the question involuntarily arises: Why need the governments stop at such armaments as now exist? Why not decrease them? Why need Germany, France, and Russia have, say, for instance, 1,000,000 men each, and not 500,000, or why not 10,000 each, or why not 1000 each? If diminution is possible, why not reduce to a minimum? And, finally, why not, instead of armies, have champions — David and Goliath — and settle international questions according to the results of their combats?

It is said that the conflicts between governments are to be decided by arbitration. But, apart from the fact that the disputes will be settled, not by representatives of the people, but by representatives of the governments, and that there is no guarantee that the decisions will be just ones, who is to carry out the decisions of the court? The army? Whose army? That of all the Powers? But the strength of those armies is unequal. Who, for instance, on the Continent is to carry out a decision which is disadvantageous, say, for Germany, Russia, and France allied together? Or who, at sea, will carry out a decision contrary to the interests of England, America, and France? The arbitrator's sentence against the military violence of states will be carried out by military violence — that is to say, the thing that has to be checked is to be the instrument by which it is to be checked. To catch a bird, put salt on its tail.

I recollect, during the siege of Sevastopol, sitting one day with the Adjutant Von Saken, commander of the garrison, when Prince S. S. Urusof, a very brave officer, a very eccentric man, and one of the best chess-players of that day in Europe, entered the room. He said he wished to see the general. One of the adjutants took him to the general's cabinet. Ten minutes later Urusof passed out again, looking discontented. The adjutant who had accompanied him returned to us and recounted, laughing, on what business Urusof had come to Von Saken. He had proposed to challenge the English to

play a game of chess for the possession of the advanced trench of the fifth bastion, which had been lost and regained several times, and had already cost some hundreds of lives.

Undoubtedly it would have been far better to play chess for the trench than to kill people. But Von Saken did not agree to Urusof's proposal, for he knew well that it would be useless to play at chess for the trench unless both sides trusted each other implicitly, and knew that what was agreed upon would be carried out. But the presence of the soldiers before the trench, and the cannon pointed at it, were signs that no such mutual confidence existed. While there were armies on both sides it was clear that the matter would be decided, not by chess, but by charges. And the same consideration applies to international questions. For them to be decided by courts of arbitration there must be, among the Powers, full mutual confidence that the decisions of the court will be respected. If there is such confidence, no armies are necessary. But if armies exist, it is obvious that this confidence is lacking, and that international questions can be decided only by the strength of the armies. As long as armies exist they are necessary, not only for acquiring fresh territories, as all the states are now doing, in Asia, in Africa, or in Europe, but also in order to maintain by force what has been obtained by force.

Obtaining or retaining by force can be done only by conquering. And it is always *les gros bataillons* which conquer. And, therefore, if a government has an army, it should have as large a one as possible. That is its business. If a government does not do that, it is unnecessary. A government may undertake many things in internal affairs; it may emancipate, civilize, enrich a people, build roads and canals, colonize waste lands, or organize public works, but there is one thing it cannot do, — viz., the very thing which this Conference is summoned to do, *i.e.* reduce its fighting force.

But if, as appeared from the explanations that followed the manifesto, it will be an aim of the Conference to

prohibit implements of destruction which seem particularly cruel (and why, while they are about it, not try to prohibit the seizure of letters, the falsification of telegrams, the spy system, and all the terrible meannesses which form an integral part of military defense?), such prohibition to use in strife all the means that exist is just as impracticable as it is to forbid people fighting for their lives to strike the most sensitive parts of the body. And why is a wound, or death, from an explosive bullet worse than a wound from the most ordinary bullet or splinter, inflicted on a very tender part? The suffering in that case also reaches the utmost limit, and is followed by just the same death as results from any other weapon.

It is amazing that sane adults can seriously express such queer ideas. No doubt diplomatists, who devote their lives to lying, are so accustomed to that vice, and live and act in so dense an atmosphere of lies, that they themselves do not see all the absurdity and mendacity of their proposals. But how can honest private people (not such as curry favor with the Tsar, by extolling his ridiculous proposals) — how is it that they do not see that the result of this Conference can be nothing but the strengthening of the deception in which governments keep their subjects, as was the case with Alexander the First's "Holy Alliance"?

The aim of the Conference will be, not to establish peace, but to hide from men the sole means of escape from the miseries of war, which lies in the refusal by private individuals of all participation in the murders of war. And, therefore, the Conference can on no account accept for discussion the question suggested.

With those who refuse military service on conscientious grounds, governments will always behave as the Russian government behaved with the Dukhobors. At the very time when it was professing to the whole world its peaceful intentions, it was (with every effort to keep the matter secret) torturing and ruining and banishing the most peaceable people in Russia, merely because they were peaceable, not in words only, but in deeds, and therefore refused to be soldiers. All the European

governments have met, and still meet, refusals of military service in the same way, though less brutally. That is how the governments of Austria, Germany, France, Sweden, Switzerland, and Holland have acted, and are still acting, and they cannot act otherwise.

They cannot act otherwise because they govern their own subjects by force — *i.e.* by means of a disciplined army — and can, therefore, on no account leave the reduction of that force (and consequently of their own power) to the casual inclination of private people, especially because nobody likes to kill or to be killed; and should they tolerate such refusals, the great majority of people probably would prefer to do other work instead of being soldiers. So that, as soon as people were permitted to refuse army service, and do work instead, there would soon be so many laborers that there would not be soldiers enough to make the workers work.

Liberals entangled in their much talking, socialists, and other so-called advanced people may think that their speeches in Parliament and at meetings, their unions, strikes, and pamphlets, are of great importance; while the refusals of military service by private individuals are unimportant occurrences not worthy of attention. The governments, however, know very well what is important to them and what is not. And the governments readily allow all sorts of liberal and radical speeches in Reichstags, as well as workmen's associations and socialist demonstrations, and they even pretend themselves to sympathize with these things, knowing that they are of great use to them in diverting people's attention from the great and only means of emancipation. But governments never openly tolerate refusals of military service, or refusals of war taxes, which are the same thing, because they know that such refusals expose the fraud of governments and strike at the root of their power.

As long as governments continue to rule their people by force, and continue to desire, as now, to obtain new possessions (Philippines, Port Arthur, etc.), and to retain what they already possess (Poland, Alsace, India, Algeria, etc.), so long will they not voluntarily decrease their

armies, but will, on the contrary, continue to increase them.

It was recently reported that an American regiment refused to go to Iloilo. This news was given as something astonishing. But the really astonishing thing is that such things do not occur continually. How could all those Russians, Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, and Americans who have fought in recent times, set off to kill men of another country at the whim of strangers, whom in most cases they did not respect, and submit themselves to suffering and death?

It seems plain and natural that all these men should recollect themselves, if not when they are enlisted as soldiers, then at the last moment when they are being led against the enemy, and should stop, fling away their weapons, and call to their opponents to do the same.

It seems so plain and natural that every one should do this, and if they do not do so it is only because they believe in the governments that assure them that all the burdens people bear for war are laid upon them for their own good. With amazing effrontery, all governments have always declared, and still go on declaring, that all the preparations for war, and even the very wars themselves, that they undertake, are necessary to preserve peace. In this sphere of hypocrisy and deception a fresh step is being made now, consisting in this: That the very governments for whose support the armies and the wars are essential pretend that they are concerned to discover means to diminish the armies and to abolish war. The governments wish to persuade the peoples that there is no need for private individuals to trouble about freeing themselves from wars; the governments themselves, at their conferences, will arrange first to reduce and presently quite to abolish armies. But this is — untrue.

Armies can be reduced and abolished only in opposition to the will, but never by the will, of governments.

Armies will only be diminished and abolished when people cease to trust governments, and themselves seek salvation from the miseries that oppress them, and seek

that safety, not by the complicated and delicate combinations of diplomatists, but in the simple fulfilment of that law, binding upon every man, inscribed in all religous teachings, and present in every heart, not to do to others what you wish them not to do to you — above all, not to slay your neighbors.

Armies will first diminish, and then disappear, only when public opinion brands with contempt those who, whether from fear, or for advantage, sell their liberty and enter the ranks of those murderers, called soldiers; and when the men now ignored and even blamed — who, in despite of all the persecution and suffering they have borne — have refused to yield the control of their actions into the hands of others, and become the tools of murder — are recognized by public opinion, to be the foremost champions and benefactors of mankind. Only then will armies first diminish and then quite disappear, and a new era in the life of mankind will commence. And that time is near.

And that is why I think that your opinion that the refusals to serve in the army are facts of immense importance, and that they will emancipate mankind from the miseries of war, is perfectly just. But your opinion that the Conference may conduce toward this is quite an error. The Conference can only divert people's eyes from the sole path leading to safety and liberty.[1]

[1] A number of Swedish gentlemen addressed a letter to Tolstoï concerning the Tsar's Peace Conference, in reply to which he wrote them a letter.

Tolstoï is always most careful in the arrangement of the thoughts he puts before the world. His works are written over and over again before they are published. On this occasion, after he had despatched the letter, he felt that the manner in which he had expressed his opinion was not satisfactory. Eventually he rewrote the article, in such a way that the whole letter was recast in a fresh form, and hardly a paragraph of the original remained unaltered. — Tr.

LETTER TO A NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER

YOU are surprised that soldiers are taught that it is right to kill people in certain cases and in war, while in the books admitted to be holy by those who so teach, there is nothing like such a permission, but, on the contrary, not only is all murder forbidden, but all insulting of others is forbidden also, and we are told not to do to others what we do not wish done to us. And you ask, is not this a fraud? And if it is a fraud, then for whose sake is it done?

Yes, it is a fraud, committed for the sake of those accustomed to live on the sweat and blood of other men, and who have therefore perverted, and still pervert, Christ's teaching, which was given to man for his good, but which has now, in its perverted form, become the chief source of human misery.

The thing has come about in this way: —

The government, and all those people of the upper classes that are near the government, and that live by the work of others, need some means of dominating the workers, and this means they find in their control of the army. Defence against foreign enemies is only an excuse. The German government frightens its subjects about the Russians and the French, the French government frightens its people about the Germans, the Russian government frightens its people about the French and the Germans, and that is the way with all governments. But neither the Germans, nor the Russians, nor the French, desire to fight their neighbors and other people; but, living in peace, they dread war more than anything else in the world. The government and the

upper governing classes, to excuse their domination of the laborers, behave like a gipsy who whips his horse before he turns a corner and then pretends he cannot hold it in. They provoke their own people and some foreign government, and then pretend that for the well-being or for the defense of their people they must declare war, which again brings profit only to generals, officers, functionaries, merchants, and, in general, to the rich. In reality war is an inevitable result of the existence of armies; and armies are only needed by governments in order to dominate their own working-classes.

The thing is a crime, but the worst of it is that the government, in order to have a plausible basis for its domination of the people, has to pretend that it holds the highest religious teaching known to man (*i.e.* the Christian), and that it brings up its subjects in this teaching. That teaching, however, is in its nature opposed not only to murder, but to all violence, and, therefore, the governments, in order to dominate the people and to be considered Christian, had to pervert Christianity and to hide its true meaning from the people, and thus deprive men of the well-being Christ brought them.

This perversion was accomplished long ago, in the time of that scoundrel the Emperor Constantine, who for doing it was enrolled among the saints.[1] All subsequent governments, especially our Russian government, do their utmost to preserve this perverted understanding, and not to allow the people to see the real meaning of Christianity; because, having seen the real meaning of Christianity, the people would perceive that the governments, with their taxes, soldiers, prisons, gallows, and false priests, are not only not the pillars of Christianity they profess to be, but are its greatest enemies.

In consequence of this perversion those frauds which have surprised you are possible, and all those terrible misfortunes occur from which people suffer.

The people are oppressed, robbed, poor, ignorant, dying of hunger. Why? Because the land is in the

[1] Constantine the Great was decreed to be a god by the Roman Senate, and was made a Christian saint by the Eastern Church. — Tr.

hands of the rich; the people are enslaved in mills and in factories, obliged to earn money because taxes are demanded from them, and the price of their labor is diminished while the price of things they need is increased.

How are they to escape? By taking the land from the rich? But if this is done, soldiers will come and will kill the rebels or put them in prison. Take the mills and factories? The same will happen. Organize and support a strike? But it is sure to fail. The rich will hold out longer than the workers, and the armies are always on the side of the capitalists. The people will never extricate themselves from the want in which they are kept, as long as the army is in the hands of the governing classes.

But who compose these armies that keep the people in this state of slavery? Who are these soldiers that will fire at the peasants who take the land, or at the strikers who will not disperse, and at the smugglers who bring in goods without paying taxes, that put in prison and there guard those who refuse to pay taxes? The soldiers are these same peasants who are deprived of land, these same strikers who want better wages, these same taxpayers who want to be rid of these taxes.

And why do these people shoot at their brothers? Because it has been instilled into them that the oath they were obliged to take on entering the service is binding, and that, though it is generally wrong to murder people, it is right to do so at the command of their superiors. That is to say that that fraud is played off upon them which has occurred to you. But here we meet the question: How is it that sensible people — often people who can read, and even educated people — believe in such an evident lie? However little education a man may have, he cannot but know that Christ did not sanction murder, but taught kindness, meekness, forgiveness of injuries, love of one's enemies, — and therefore he cannot help seeing that on the basis of Christian teaching he cannot pledge himself in advance to kill all whom he may be ordered to kill.

The question is: How can sensible people believe, as all now serving in the army have believed and still believe, such an evident fraud? The answer is that it is not this one fraud by itself that takes people in, but they have from childhood been deprived of the proper use of their reason by a whole series of frauds, a whole system of frauds, called the Orthodox Faith, which is nothing but the grossest idolatry. In this faith people are taught that God is triple, that besides this triple God there is a Queen of Heaven,[1] and besides this queen there are various saints whose corpses have not decayed,[2] and besides these saints there are ikons[3] of the Gods and of the Queen of Heaven, to which one should offer candles and pray with one's hands; and that the most important and holy thing on earth is the pap,[4] which the parson makes of wine and white bread on Sundays behind a railing; and that after the parson has whispered over it, the wine is no longer wine, and the white bread is not bread, but they are the blood and flesh of one of the triple Gods, etc.

All this is so stupid and senseless that it is quite impossible to understand what it all means. And the very people who teach this faith do not tell you to understand it, but only tell you to believe it; and people trained to it from childhood can believe any kind of nonsense that is told

[1] The Holy Virgin, the "Mother of God," and "Queen of Heaven," plays a prominent part in the Orthodox Eastern Church, *i.e.* the Russo-Greek Church. — Tr.

[2] One proof of holiness adduced as justifying admission to the rank of sainthood is the non-decomposition of the holy person's corpse. These miraculously preserved bodies are enshrined in chapels, monasteries, and cathedrals, and are there visited by pilgrims who offer up prayers at the shrine, place candles before it, and usually leave some contribution for the benefit of the establishment. The inspection allowed is not very close, and there are stories of people being employed to stuff the saints with straw. These tales are, however, considered irreligious. — Tr.

[3] The *ikons* of the Eastern Church are not "graven images," but are pictures painted in a conventional cadaverous manner on wood; these are often covered with an embossed metal cover allowing only the hands and face to be seen, and making the ikon as much like an image as a picture. — Tr.

[4] "The pap" is the author's irreverent way of referring to the mixture of bread and wine administered by the priests of the Orthodox Eastern Church at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. — Tr.

them. And when men have been so befooled that they believe that God hangs in the corner,[1] or sits in a morsel of pap which the parson gives out in a spoon; that to kiss a board or some relics, and to put candles in front of them, is useful for life here and hereafter, — they are called on to enter the military service, where they are humbugged to any extent, being made to swear on the Gospels (in which swearing is prohibited) that they will do just what is forbidden in those Gospels, and then taught that to kill people at the word of those in command is not a sin, but that to refuse to submit to those in command is a sin. So that the fraud played off on soldiers, when it is instilled into them that they may without sin kill people at the wish of those in command, is not an isolated fraud, but is bound up with a whole system of fraud, without which this one fraud would not deceive them.

Only a man who is quite befooled by the false faith called Orthodoxy, palmed off upon him for the true Christian faith, can believe that there is no sin in a Christian entering the army, promising blindly to obey any man who ranks above him in the service, and, at the will of others, learning to kill, and committing that most terrible crime, forbidden by all laws.

A man free from the pseudo-Christian faith called Orthodox will not believe that.

And that is why the so-called Sectarians — *i.e.* Christians who have repudiated the Orthodox teaching and acknowledge Christ's teaching as explained in the Gospels, and especially in the Sermon on the Mount — are not tricked by this deception, but have frequently refused, and still do refuse, to be soldiers, considering such occupation incompatible with Christianity and preferring to bear all kinds of persecution, as hundreds and thousands of people are doing; in Russia among the Dukhobors and Molokans, in Austria the Nazarenes, and in

[1] This refers to the common practice of hanging an ikon in the corner of each dwelling-room. These ikons are called "Gods," and are prayed to in a way that among common and devout people often amounts to idolatry. — TR.

Sweden, Switzerland, and Germany among members of the Evangelical sects. The government knows this, and is therefore exceedingly anxious that the general Church fraud, without which its power could not be maintained, should be commenced with every child from early infancy, and should be continually maintained in such a way that none may avoid it. The government tolerates anything else, drunkenness and vice (and not only tolerates, but even organizes drunkenness and vice — they help to stupefy people), but by all the means in its power it hinders those who have escaped from its trap from assisting others to escape.

The Russian government perpetrates this fraud with special craft and cruelty. It orders all its subjects to baptize their children during infancy into the false faith called Orthodoxy, and it threatens to punish them if they disobey. And when the children are baptized, *i.e.* are reckoned as Orthodox, then under threats of criminal penalties they are forbidden to discuss the faith into which, without their wish, they were baptized; and for such discussion of that faith, as well as for renouncing it and passing to another, they are actually punished. So that about all Russians it cannot be said that they believe the Orthodox faith, — they do not know whether they believe it or not, but were converted to it during infancy and kept in it by violence, *i.e.* by the fear of punishment. All Russians were entrapped into Orthodoxy by a cunning fraud, and are kept in it by cruel force. Using the power it wields, the government perpetrates and maintains this fraud, and the fraud upholds its power.

And, therefore, the only means to free people from their many miseries lies in freeing them from the false faith instilled in them by government, and in their imbibing the true Christian teaching which is hidden by this false teaching. The true Christian teaching is very simple, clear, and obvious to all, as Christ said. But it is simple and accessible only when man is freed from that falsehood in which we were all educated, and which is passed off upon us as God's truth.

Nothing needful can be poured into a vessel full of what is useless. We must first empty out what is useless. So it is with the acquirement of true Christian teaching. We have first to understand that all the stories telling how God six thousand years ago made the world; how Adam sinned and the human race fell; and how the Son of God, a God born of a virgin, came on earth and redeemed man; and all the fables in the Old Testament and in the Gospels, and all the lives of the saints with their stories of miracles and relics, — are nothing but a gross hash of Jewish superstitions and priestly frauds. Only to a man quite free from this deception can the clear and simple teaching of Christ, which needs no explanation, be accessible and comprehensible. That teaching tells us nothing of the beginning, or of the end, of the world, or about God and His purpose, or in general about things which we cannot, and need not, know; but it speaks only of what man must do to save himself, *i.e.* how best to live the life he has come into, in this world, from birth to death. For this purpose it is only necessary to act to others as we wish them to act to us. In that is all the law and the prophets, as Christ said. And to act in that way we need neither ikons, nor relics, nor church services, nor priests, nor catechisms, nor governments, but on the contrary, we need perfect freedom from all that; for to do to others as we wish them to do to us is only possible when a man is free from the fables which the priests give out as the only truth, and is not bound by promises to act as other people may order. Only such a man will be capable of fulfilling — not his own will nor that of other men — but the will of God.

And the will of God is not that we should fight and oppress the weak, but that we should acknowledge all men to be our brothers and should serve one another.

These are the thoughts your letter has aroused in me. I shall be very glad if they help to clear up the questions you are thinking about.

LETTER TO DR. EUGEN HEINRICH SCHMITT[1]

YOU write to me that people seem quite unable to understand that to serve the government is incompatible with Christianity.

In just the same way people were long unable to see that indulgences, inquisitions, slavery, and tortures were incompatible with Christianity. But a time came when it was comprehensible; and a time will come when men will understand the incompatibility with Christianity, first of war service (that already is beginning to be felt), and then of service to government in general.

It is now fifty years since a not widely known, but very remarkable, American writer — Thoreau — not only clearly expressed that incompatibility in his admirable essay on "Civil Disobedience," but gave a practical example of such disobedience. Not wishing to be an accomplice or supporter of a government which legalized slavery, he declined to pay a tax demanded of him, and went to prison for it.

Thoreau refused to pay taxes to government, and evidently the same motives as actuated him would prevent men from serving a government. As, in your letter to the minister, you have admirably expressed it: you do not consider it compatible with your moral dignity to work for an institution which represents legalized murder and robbery.

Thoreau was, I think, the first to express this view. People paid scant attention to either his refusal or his article fifty years ago — the thing seemed so strange.

[1] Editor of *Ohne Staat*, Budapest.

It was put down to his eccentricity. To-day your refusal attracts some attention, and, as is always the case when new truth is clearly expressed, it evokes a double surprise — first, surprise that a man should say such queer things, and then, surprise that I had not myself discovered what this man is saying; it is so certain and so obvious.

Such a truth as that a Christian must not be a soldier — *i.e.* a murderer — and must not be the servant of an institution maintained by violence and murder, is so certain, so clear and irrefutable, that to enable people to grasp it, discussion, proof, or eloquence are not necessary. For the majority of men to hear and understand this truth, it is only needful that it should be constantly repeated.

The truth that a Christian should not take part in murdering, or serve the chiefs of the murderers for a salary collected from the poor by force, is so plain and indisputable that those who hear it cannot but agree with it. And if a man continues to act contrary to these truths after hearing them, it is only because he is accustomed to act contrary to them, and it is difficult to break the habit. Moreover, as long as most people act as he does, he will not, by acting contrary to the truth, lose the regard of the majority of those who are most respected.

The case is the same as it is with the question of vegetarianism. "A man can live and be healthy without killing animals for food; therefore, if he eats meat, he participates in taking animal life merely for the sake of his appetite. And to act so is immoral." It is so simple and indubitable that it is impossible not to agree with it. But because most people do eat meat, people, on hearing the case stated, admit its justice, and then, laughing, say: "But a good beefsteak is a good thing all the same; and I shall eat one at dinner to-day with pleasure."

Just in the same way officers in the army, and officials employed in the civil service, treat statements of the incompatibility of Christianity and humanitarianism with

military and civil service. "Yes, of course, it 's true,' says such a man, "but, all the same, it is nice to wear a uniform and epaulets, which serve as an introduction anywhere, and which people respect; and it is still better to know that, whatever happens, your salary will be paid punctually and accurately on the first of each month. So that though your statement of the case is correct, I am nevertheless bent on getting a rise of salary and securing a pension."

The position is admitted to be indubitable; but, in the first place, one need not oneself kill an ox to get beefsteaks. It has already been killed. And one need not oneself collect taxes or murder. The taxes are already collected, and the army already exists. And, secondly, most people have not yet heard this view of things, and do not know that it is wrong to do these things. So that, for the present, one need not refuse a well-cooked beefsteak, or a uniform, and all its advantages, or medals and orders; or, above all, a secure monthly salary; "and as for the future, we shall see when the time comes."

At the root of the matter lies the fact that people have not yet heard the injustice and wickedness of such a way of life stated. And, therefore, it is necessary continually to repeat "Carthago delenda est,"[1] and Carthage will certainly fall.

I do not say that government and its power will be destroyed. It will not fall to pieces quickly; there are still too many gross elements among the people to support it. But the Christian support of government will be destroyed — *i.e.* those who do violence will cease to find support for their authority in the sanctity of Christianity. Those who employ violence will be simply violators, and nothing else. And when that is so — when they can no longer cloak themselves with pseudo-Christianity — then the end of all violence will be near.

[1] Cato the Elder was so impressed with the necessity of refusing all compromise with the Carthaginians, that for many years he ended every speech he made in the Senate with the words, "Carthage must be destroyed." — Tr.

Let us seek to hasten that end. "Carthago delenda est." Government is violence, Christianity is meekness, non-resistance, love. And, therefore, government cannot be Christian, and a man who wishes to be a Christian must not serve government. Government cannot be Christian. A Christian cannot serve government. Government cannot .... and so on.

It is curious that just when you wrote to me about the incapability of governmental activity with Christianity, I was writing a long letter[1] on the same theme to a lady acquaintance. I send you a copy of that letter. You are at liberty to publish it if you wish to do so.[2]

[1] Published as "A Letter to the Liberals" (p. 197 *supra*).

[2] Writing to a man who shared his views on no-government and non-resistance, Tolstoï, in this letter to Dr. Schmitt, expresses himself briefly, without reiterating arguments already familiar to his correspondent.— Ed.

A REPLY TO CRITICISMS

[The following letter was addressed by Count Tolstoï to a Polish journalist, in September, 1895.]

I RECEIVED your letter, and hastened to read your article in *The Northern Messenger*. I am much obliged to you for drawing my attention to this. The article is excellent, and I have learned from it much that was new and joyful to me. I knew about Mickiewicz and Tovianski. But I ascribed their religious direction to the exceptional dispositions of these two individuals. From your article I learn that they are only the forerunners of a Christian movement, deeply touching in its nobility and sincerity, which has been called forth by patriotism, and which still endures.

My article, "Christianity and Patriotism," evoked very many objections. I received them from philosophers and journalists, Russian, French, German, and Austrian; and now from you. All the objections, yours among them, amount to this: That my condemnation of patriotism is justly applied to bad patriotism, but has no foundation as regards good and useful patriotism. But, as to what constitutes this latter, and how it is distinguishable from bad patriotism, no one has yet troubled to explain.

You say in your letter, that "as well as the militant, inhumane patriotism of strong nations, there is also the opposite patriotism of enslaved nations, who seek only to defend their native faith and language against the enemy." You thus identify good patriotism as the patriotism of the oppressed. But the oppression or the dominance of nations makes no essential difference in what is called patriotism. Fire is always the same

burning and dangerous fire, whether it blaze up in a bonfire or flicker in a match.

By "patriotism" is really meant a love for one's own nation above other nations; just as by "egoism" is meant a love for oneself more than for others. It is hard to imagine how such preference for one nation above others can be deemed a good, and therefore a desirable, disposition. If you say that patriotism is more pardonable in the oppressed than in the oppressor, just as a manifestation of egoism is more pardonable in a man who is being strangled than in one who is left in peace, then it is impossible to disagree with you; nevertheless, patriotism cannot change its nature, whether it is displayed in oppressor or oppressed. This disposition of preference for one nation over all others, like egoism, can in nowise be good.

But not only is patriotism a bad disposition, it is unreasonable in principle.

By patriotism is meant, not only spontaneous, instinctive love for one's own nation, and preference for it above all other nations, but also the belief that such love and preference are good and useful. This belief is especially unreasonable in Christian nations.

It is unreasonable, not only because it runs counter to the first principles of Christ's teachings, but also because Christianity gains, by its own method, everything for which patriotism seeks; thus making patriotism superfluous, unnecessary, and a hindrance, like a lamp by daylight.

A man who, like Krasinski, believes that "the Church of God is not in this or that place, this or that rite, but in the whole planet, and in all the relations which can exist between individuals and nations" — such a man can no longer be a patriot; but he will, in the name of Christianity, do all that patriotism can demand of him. For example, patriotism demands of its votary the devotion of his life for the sake of his fellow-countrymen. But Christianity, demanding the same devotion for the good of all men, demands it all the more forcibly and naturally for those of one's own nation.

You write of the terrible acts of violence perpetrated by the savage, stupid, and cruel Russian authorities, directed against the belief and language of the Poles; and you exhibit these as providing a motive for patriotic action. But I do not see this. To feel indignation at these deeds, and to oppose them with all one's might, it is not necessary to be either a Pole or a patriot; to be a Christian is enough.

Upon this point I, for instance, who am not a Pole, will yet vie with any Pole in the degree of my abhorrence of, my indignation at, those savage and stupid measures which Russian government officials direct against the Poles. I will go as far also, in my desire to oppose those measures; and this, not because I care for Catholicism above other religions, or for the Polish language above other tongues, but because I strive to be a Christian. In like manner, for the abolition of such evils, whether in Poland, or Alsace, or Bohemia, we need the spread, not of patriotism, but of true Christianity.

Some may say, "We do not wish to accept Christianity, and we are therefore free to exalt patriotism." But when once men have acknowledged Christianity, or at least the perception of human equality and respect for human dignity which flow from Christianity, there is then no longer room for patriotism. What, again, most astonishes me in all this is, that the upholders of the patriotism of the oppressed do not see how harmful patriotism, however perfect and refined they may represent it to be, is to their own particular cause.

Those attacks upon language and religion in Poland, the Baltic provinces, Alsace, Bohemia, upon the Jews in Russia, in every place where such acts of violence occur — in what name have they been, and are they, perpetrated? In none other than the name of that patriotism which you defend.

Ask our savage Russifiers of Poland and the Baltic provinces, ask the persecutors of the Jews, why they act thus. They will tell you it is in defence of their native religion and language; they will tell you that if they do not act thus, their religion and language will

suffer — the Russians will be Polonized, Teutonized, Judaized.

Were there no doctrine that patriotism is beneficial, men of the end of the nineteenth century would never be found sunken so low as to determine upon the abominations they at present enact.

Now, learned men (our most savage religious persecutor is an ex-professor) find standing-ground upon patriotism. They know history, they know of all the fruitless horrors of persecution for the sake of language and religion; but, thanks to the doctrine of patriotism, they have a justification.

Patriotism gives them a standing-ground, which Christianity takes from under their feet. Therefore it behooves conquered nations, sufferers from oppression, to destroy patriotism, to destroy its doctrinal foundations, to ridicule it, and not to exalt it.

Defending patriotism, people go on to talk of the individuality of nations, of patriotism aiming to save the individuality of a nation; while the individuality of nations is assumed to be a necessary condition of progress.

But, to begin with, who says that such individuality is necessary to progress? This is in no way proved, and we have no right to take such an arbitrary assumption as an axiom. In the next place, even if it be accepted, even then, the way for a nation to assert its individuality is, not to struggle to do so, but, on the contrary, to forget about its individuality, and then to accomplish with all its power that which its people feel themselves most able, and therefore most called upon, to do. Just as an individual will most assert his individuality, not when he pays heed to it, but when, having forgotten about it, he, to the limit of his strength and capacity, does that to which his nature attracts him. So matters would be arranged among a people who, working for their support as a community, must choose different kinds of work and different places. Only let each one follow his strength and capacity in doing what is most necessary to the community, and do this as well as he

can, and all will inevitably work differently, with different tools and in different places.

One of the commonest sophisms used in defending immorality consists in wilfully confusing what is with what should be, and, having begun to speak of one thing, substituting another. This very sophism is employed above all in relation to patriotism. It is a fact, that to every Pole, the Pole is nearest and dearest; to the German, the German; to the Jew, the Jew; to the Russian, the Russian. It is even true that, through historical causes and bad education, the people of one nation instinctively feel aversion and ill-will to those of another. All this is so; but to admit it, like admitting the fact that each man loves himself more than he loves others, can in no way prove that it ought so to be. On the contrary, the whole concern of all humanity, and of every individual, lies in suppressing these preferences and aversions, in battling with them, and in deliberately behaving toward other nations and toward individual foreigners, exactly as toward one's own nation and fellow-countrymen.

To care for patriotism as an emotion worthy to be cultivated in every man is wholly superfluous. God, or nature, has already, without our care, so provided for this feeling that every man has it, leaving us no cause to trouble about cultivating it in ourselves and others. We must concern ourselves, not about patriotism, but to bring into life that light which is within us; to change the character of life, and approach it to the ideal which stands before us. That ideal, presented in our time before every man, and illumined with the true light from Christ, has not to do with the resuscitation of Poland, Bohemia, Ireland, Armenia; has not to do with the preservation of the unity and greatness of Russia, England, Germany, Austria; but, on the contrary, is concerned to destroy this unity and greatness of Russia, England, Germany, Austria, by the destruction of those force-maintained anti-Christian combinations called states, which stand in the way of all true progress, and occasion the sufferings of oppressed and

conquered nations; occasion all those evils from which contemporary humanity suffers. Such destruction is only possible through true enlightenment, resulting in the avowal that we, before being Russians, Poles, Germans, are men, the followers of one teacher, the children of one Father, brothers; and this the best representatives of the Polish nation understand, as you have so excellently shown in your article. Day by day this is understood by a greater and greater number of people throughout the whole world. So that the days of State violence are already numbered, and the liberation, not only of conquered nations, but of the crushed working-people, is by this time near, if only we ourselves will not delay the time of liberation, by sharing with deed and word in the violent measures of governments. The approval of patriotism of any kind as a good quality, and the incitement of the people to patriotism, are chief hindrances to the attainment of those ideals which rise before us.

Once more, I thank you very much for your letter, for the excellent article, and for the opportunity you have given me of again reconsidering, verifying, and expressing my ideas on patriotism.

REPLY TO CRITICS

A LETTER ADDRESSED TO "THE DAILY CHRONICLE"

SINCE the appearance of my book, "The Kingdom of God is within Us," and my article on "Patriotism and Christianity," I often hear and read in articles and letters addressed to me, arguments against, I will not say the ideas expressed in those books, but against such misconstructions as are put upon them. This is done sometimes consciously, but very often unwittingly, and is wholly due to a want of understanding of the spirit of the Christian religion.

"It is all very well," they say; "despotism, capital punishments, wars, the arming of all Europe, the precarious state of the working-classes, are indeed great evils, and you are right in condemning all this; but how can we do without government? What will you give instead of it? Being ourselves men, with a limited knowledge and intellect, have we the right, just because it seems best to us, to destroy that order of things which has helped our forefathers to attain the present state of civilization and its advantages? If you destroy the State, you must put something in its place. How can we run the risk of all the calamities which might ensue if government was abolished?"

But the fact is that the Christian doctrine, in its true sense, never proposed to abolish anything, nor to change any human organization. The very thing which distinguishes Christian religion from all other religions and social doctrines is that it gives men the possibilities of a real and good life, not by means of general laws regulating the lives of all men, but by enlightening each individual man with regard to the sense of his own life, by showing him wherein consists the

evil and the real good of his life. And the sense of life thus imparted to man by the Christian doctrine is so simple, so convincing, and leaves so little room for doubt, that if once man understands it, and, therefore, conceives wherein is the real good and the real evil of his life, he can never again consciously do what he considers to be the evil of his life, nor abstain from doing what he considers to be the real good of it, as surely as a plant cannot help turning toward light, and water cannot help running downward.

The sense of life, as shown by the Christian religion, consists in living so as to do the will of Him who sent us into life, from whom we are come, and to whom we shall return. The evil of our life consists in acting against this will, and the good in fulfilling it. And the rule given to us for the fulfilment of this will is so very plain and simple that it is impossible not to understand, or to misunderstand it.

If you cannot do unto others what you would that they should do to you, at least do not unto them what you would not that they should do unto you.

If you would not be made to work ten hours at a stretch in factories or in mines, if you would not have your children hungry, cold, and ignorant, if you would not be robbed of the land that feeds you, if you would not be shut up in prisons and sent to the gallows or hanged for committing an unlawful deed through passion or ignorance, if you would not suffer wounds nor be killed in war, — do not do this to others. All this is so simple and straightforward, and admits of so little doubt, that it is impossible for the simplest child not to understand, nor for the cleverest man to refute it. It is impossible to refute this law, especially because this law is given to us, not only by all the wisest men of the world, not only by the Man who is considered to be God by the majority of Christians, but because it is written in our minds and hearts.

Let us imagine a servant in his lord's power, appointed by his master to a task he loves and understands. If this man were to be addressed by men whom he knows

to be dependent on his master in the same way as he is, to whom similar tasks are set at which they will not work, and who would entreat him for his own good and for the good of other men to do what is directly opposed to his lord's plain commandments, what answer can any reasonable servant give to such entreaties? But this simile is far from fully expressing what a Christian must feel when he is called upon to take an active part in oppressing, robbing people of their land, in executing them, in waging war, and so on, all things which governments call upon us to do; for, however binding the commands of that master may have been to his servant, they can never be compared to that unquestionable knowledge which every man, as long as he is not corrupted by false doctrines, does possess, that he cannot and must not do unto others what he does not wish to be done unto him, and therefore cannot and must not take part in all things opposed to the rule of his Master, which are imposed upon him by governments.

Therefore the question for a Christian does not lie in this: whether or no a man has the right to destroy the existing order of things, and to establish another in its stead, or to decide which kind of government will be the best, as the question is sometimes purposely and very often unintentionally put by the enemies of Christianity (the Christian does not think about the general order of things, but leaves the guidance of them to God, for he firmly believes God has implanted His law in our minds and hearts, that there may be order, not disorder, and that nothing but good can arise from our following the unquestionable law of God, which has been so plainly manifested to us); but the question, the decision of which is not optional, but unavoidable, and which daily presents itself for a Christian to decide, is: How am I to act in the dilemma which is constantly before me? Shall I form part of a government which recognizes the right to own landed property by men who never work on it, which levies taxes on the poor in order to give them to the rich, which condemns erring men to gallows and death, which sends out soldiers to commit murder,

which depraves whole races of men by means of opium and brandy, etc., or shall I refuse to take a share in a government, the doings of which are contrary to my conscience? But what will come of it, what sort of State will there be, if I act in this way, is a thing I do not know and which I shall not say I do not wish to know, but which I cannot know.

The main strength of Christ's teaching consists especially in this: that He brought the question of conduct from a world of conjecture and eternal doubt, down to a firm and indisputable ground. Some people say, "But we also do not deny the evils of the existing order and the necessity of changing it, but we wish to change it, not suddenly, by means of refusing to take any part in the government, but, on the contrary, by participating in the government, by gaining more and more freedom, political rights, and obtaining the election of the true friends of the people and the enemies of all violence."

This would be very well, if taking part in one's government and trying to improve it, could coincide with the aim of human life. But, unfortunately, it not only does not coincide, but is quite opposed to it.

Supposing human life to be limited to this world, its aim can consist only in man's individual happiness; if, on the other hand, life does not end in this world, its aim can consist only in doing the will of God. In both cases it does not coincide with the progress of governments. If it lies here, in man's personal happiness, and if life ends here, what should I care about the future prosperity of a government which will come about when, in all probability, I shall be there no more? But if my life is immortal, then the prosperity of the English, the Russian, the German, or any other state, which is to come in the twentieth century, is too paltry an aim for me, and can never satisfy the cravings of my immortal soul. A sufficient aim for my life is either my immediate personal good, which does not coincide with the government measures and improvements, or the fulfilment of the will of God, which also not only cannot be conciliated with the requirements of government, but is

quite opposed to them. The vital question not only for a Christian, but, I think, for any reasonable being, when he is summoned to take part in governmental acts, lies not in the prosperity of his state or government, but in this question: —

"Wilt thou, a being of reason and goodness, who comes to-day and may vanish to-morrow, wilt thou, if thou believest in the existence of God, act against His law and His will, knowing that any moment thou canst return to Him; or, if thou dost not believe in Him, wilt thou, knowing that if thou errest thou shalt never be able to redeem thy error, wilt thou, nevertheless, act in opposition to the principles of reason and love, by which alone thou canst be guided in life? Wilt thou, at the request of thy government, take oaths, defend, by compulsion, the owner of land or capital, wilt thou pay taxes for keeping policemen, soldiers, warships, wilt thou take part in parliaments, law courts, condemnations, and wars?"

And to all this — I will not say for a Christian, but for a reasonable being — there can be but one answer: "No, I cannot, and will not." But they say, "This will destroy the State and the existing order." If the fulfilment of the will of God is destroying the existing order, is it not a proof that this existing order is contrary to the will of God, and ought to be destroyed?

January, 1895.

LETTER TO THE LIBERALS[1]

I SHOULD be very glad to join you and your associates — whose work I know and appreciate — in standing up for the rights of the "Literature Committee," and in opposing the enemies of popular education. But in the sphere in which you are working, I see no way to resist them.

My only consolation is that I, too, am constantly engaged in struggling against the same enemies of enlightenment, though in another manner.

Concerning the special question with which you are preoccupied, I think that, in place of the "Literature Committee" which has been prohibited, a number of other "Literature Associations," to pursue the same objects, should be formed without consulting the government, and without asking permission from any censor. Let government, if it likes, prosecute these "Literature Associations," punish the members, banish them, etc. If government does that, it will merely cause people to

[1] This letter was addressed to a Russian lady who wrote to Tolstoĭ asking his advice or assistance when the "Literature Committee," *Komitet Gramotnosti*, in which she was actively engaged, was closed. The circumstances were as follows: A "Voluntary Economic Society" (founded in the reign of Catherine the Great) existed, and was allowed to debate economic problems within certain limits. Its existence was sanctioned by, and it was under the control of, the Ministry of the Interior. A branch of this society was formed called the "Literature Committee." This branch aimed at spreading good and wholesome literature among the people and in the schools, by establishing libraries or in other ways. However, their views as to what books it is good for people to read did not tally with those of the government, and in 1866 it was decreed that the "Voluntary Economic Society" should be transferred from the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior to that of the Ministry of Education. This sounded harmless, but translated into unofficial language it meant that the activity of the Committee was to terminate, and the proceeding of the whole Society was to be reduced to a formality. — Tr.

attach special importance to good books and to libraries, and it will strengthen the trend toward enlightenment.

It seems to me that it is now specially important to do what is right quietly and persistently, not only without asking permission from government, but consciously avoiding its participation. The strength of the government lies in the people's ignorance, and government knows this, and will, therefore, always oppose true enlightenment. It is time we realized that fact. And it is most undesirable to let government, while it is diffusing darkness, pretend it is busy with the enlightenment of the people. It is doing this now, by means of all sorts of pseudo-educational establishments which it controls: schools, high schools, universities, academies, and all kinds of committees and congresses. But good is good, and enlightenment is enlightenment, only when it is quite good and quite enlightened, and not when it is toned down to meet the requirements of Delyanof's or Durnovo's[1] circulars. And I am extremely sorry when I see valuable, disinterested, and self-sacrificing efforts spent unprofitably. Sometimes it seems to me quite comical to see good, wise people spending their strength in a struggle against government, to be maintained on the basis of laws which that very government itself makes just what it likes.

The matter is, it seems to me, this: —

There are people (we ourselves are such) who realize that our government is very bad, and who struggle against it. From before the days of Radishchef[2] and the Decembrists[3] there have been two ways of carrying on the struggle; one way is that of Stenka Razin,[4] Pu-

[1] Delyanof was Minister of Education and Durnovo was Minister of the Interior when the Committee was suppressed. The latter is now President of the Council of Ministers. — Tr.

[2] Radishchef, the author of "A Journey from Petersburg to Moscow," was a Liberal whose efforts toward the abolition of serfdom displeased the government. He committed suicide in 1802. — Tr.

[3] The Decembrists were members of the organization which attempted, by force, to terminate autocratic government in Russia when Nicholas I. ascended the throne in 1825. — Tr.

[4] Stenka Razin was a Cossack who raised a formidable insurrection in

gatchef,[1] the Decembrists, the Revolutionary party [2] of the years sixty, the Terrorists [3] of the thirteenth of March, and others.

The other way is that which is preached and practised by you, — the method of the "Gradualists," which consists in carrying on the struggle without violence and within the limits of the law, conquering constitutional rights bit by bit.

Both these methods have been employed unceasingly within my memory for more than half a century, and yet the state of things grows worse and worse. Even such signs of improvement as do show themselves have come, not from either of these kinds of activity, but from causes of which I will speak later on, and in spite of the harm done by these two kinds of activity. Meanwhile, the power against which we struggle grows ever greater, stronger, and more insolent. The last rays of self-government — the *zemstvos* (local government boards), public trial, your Literature Committee, etc. — are all being done away with.

Now that both methods have been ineffectually tried for so long a time, we may, it seems to me, see clearly that neither the one nor the other will do, — and why this is so. To me, at least, who have always disliked our government, but have never adopted either of the above methods of resisting it, the defects of both methods are apparent.

the seventeenth century. He was eventually defeated and captured, and was executed in Moscow in 1671. — Tr.

[1] Pugatchef headed the most formidable Russian insurrection of the eighteenth century. He was executed in Moscow in 1775. — Tr.

[2] The series of reforms, including the abolition of serfdom, which followed the Crimean War and the death of Nicholas I., were, from the first, adopted half-heartedly. Since about the time of the Polish insurrection (1863) the reactionary party obtained control of the government and has kept it ever since. The more vehement members of the Liberal party losing hope of constitutional reform, organized a Revolutionary party in the sixties, and later on the Terrorist party was formed, which organized assassinations as a means toward liberty, equality, and fraternity. — Tr.

[3] Alexander II. was killed by a bomb thrown at him in the streets of Petersburg on the thirteenth of March (N. S.), 1881. This assassination was organized by the Terrorist party. — Tr.

The first way is unsatisfactory because (even could an attempt to alter the existing régime by violent means succeed) there would be no guarantee that the new organization would be durable, and that the enemies of that new order would not, at some convenient opportunity, triumph by using violence such as has been used against them, as has happened over and over again in France and wherever else there have been revolutions. And so the new order of things, established by violence, would have continually to be supported by violence, *i.e.* by wrong-doing. And, consequently, it would inevitably and very quickly be vitiated like the order it replaced. And in case of failure, all the violence of the revolutionists only strengthens the order of things they strive against (as has always been the case, in our Russian experience, from Pugatchef's rebellion to the attempt of the thirteenth of March), for it drives the whole crowd of undecided people, who stand wavering between the two parties, into the camp of the conservative and retrograde party. So I think that, guided by both reason and experience, we may boldly say that this means, besides being immoral, is also irrational and ineffective.

The other method is, in my opinion, even less effective or rational. It is ineffective and irrational because government, having in its hands the whole power (the army, the administration, the Church, the schools, and police), and framing what are called the laws, on the basis of which the Liberals wish to resist it, — this government knows very well what is really dangerous to it, and will never let people who submit to it, and act under its guidance, do anything that will undermine its authority. For instance, take the case before us: a government such as ours (or any other), which rests on the ignorance of the people, will never consent to their being really enlightened. It will sanction all kinds of pseudo-educational organizations, controlled by itself: schools, high schools, universities, academies, and all kinds of committees and congresses and publications sanctioned by the censor, — as long as those organizations and publications serve its purpose, *i.e.* stupefy

people, or, at least, do not hinder the stupefaction of people. But as soon as those organizations, or publications, attempt to cure that on which the power of government rests, *i.e.* the blindness of the people, the government will simply, and without rendering account to any one, or saying why it acts so and not otherwise, pronounce its "veto" and will rearrange, or close, the establishments and organizations and will forbid the publications. And therefore, as both reason and experience clearly show, such an illusory, gradual conquest of rights is a self-deception which suits the government admirably, and which it, therefore, is even ready to encourage.

But not only is this activity irrational and ineffectual, it is also harmful. It is harmful because enlightened, good, and honest people by entering the ranks of the government give it a moral authority which but for them it would not possess. If the government were made up entirely of that coarse element — the violators, self-seekers, and flatterers — who form its core, it could not continue to exist. The fact that honest and enlightened people are found who participate in the affairs of the government gives government whatever it possesses of moral prestige.

That is one evil resulting from the activity of Liberals who participate in the affairs of government, or who come to terms with it. Another evil of such activity is that, in order to secure opportunities to carry on their work, these highly enlightened and honest people have to begin to compromise, and so, little by little, come to consider that, for a good end, one may swerve somewhat from truth in word and deed. For instance, that one may, though not believing in the established Church, go through its ceremonies; may take oaths; and may, when necessary for the success of some affair, present petitions couched in language which is untrue and offensive to man's natural dignity: may enter the army; may take part in a local government which has been stripped of all its powers; may serve as a master or a professor, teaching not what one considers

necessary oneself, but what one is told to preach by government; and that one may even become a Zemsky Nachalnik,[1] submitting to governmental demands and instructions which violate one's conscience; may edit newspapers and periodicals, remaining silent about what ought to be mentioned, and printing what one is ordered to print; and entering into these compromises — the limits of which cannot be foreseen — enlightened and honest people (who alone could form some barrier to the infringements of human liberty by the government, imperceptibly retreating ever farther and farther from the demands of conscience) fall at last into a position of complete dependency on government. They receive rewards and salaries from it, and, continuing to imagine they are forwarding liberal ideas, they become the humble servants and supporters of the very order against which they set out to fight.

It is true that there are also better, sincere people in the Liberal camp, whom the government cannot bribe, and who remain unbought and free from salaries and position. But even these people have been insnared in the nets spread by government, beat their wings in their cages (as you are now doing with your Committee), unable to advance from the spot they are on. Or else, becoming enraged, they go over to the revolutionary camp; or they shoot themselves, or take to drink, or they abandon the whole struggle in despair, and, oftenest of all, retire into literary activity, in which, yielding to the demands of the censor, they say only what they are allowed to say, and — by that very silence about what

[1] During the Reform period, in the reign of Alexander II., many iniquities of the old judicial system were abolished. Among other innovations "Judges of the Peace" were appointed to act as magistrates. They were elected (indirectly); if possessed of a certain property qualification, men of any class were eligible, and the regulations under which they acted were drawn up in a comparatively liberal spirit. Under Alexander III. the office of "Judge of the Peace" was abolished, and was replaced by "Zemsky Nachalniks." Only members of the aristocracy were eligible; they were not elected, but appointed by government, and they were armed with authority to have peasants flogged. They were less like magistrates and more like government officials than the "Judges of the Peace" had been. — Tr.

is most important — convey to the public distorted views which just suit the government. But they continue to imagine that they are serving society by the writings which give them the means of subsistence.

Thus, both reflection and experience alike show me that both the means of combating government, heretofore believed in, are not only ineffectual, but actually tend to strengthen the power and the irresponsibility of government.

What is to be done? Evidently not what for seventy years past has proved fruitless, and has only produced inverse result. What is to be done? Just what those have done, thanks to whose activity is due that progress toward light and good which has been achieved since the world began, and is still being achieved to-day. That is what must be done. And what is it?

Merely the simple, quiet, truthful carrying on of what you consider good and needful, quite independently of government, and of whether it likes it or not. In other words: standing up for your rights, not as a member of the Literature Committee, not as a deputy, not as a landowner, not as a merchant, not even as a member of Parliament; but standing up for your rights as a rational and free man, and defending them, not as the rights of local boards or committees are defended, with concessions and compromises, but without any concessions and compromises, in the only way in which moral and human dignity can be defended.

Successfully to defend a fortress one has to burn all the houses in the suburbs, and to leave only what is strong and what we intend not to surrender on any account. Only from the basis of this firm stronghold can we conquer all we require. True, the rights of a member of Parliament, or even of a member of a local board, are greater than the rights of a plain man; and it seems as if we could do much by using those rights. But the hitch is that in order to obtain the rights of a member of Parliament, or of a committeeman, one has to abandon part of one's rights as a man. And having abandoned part of one's rights as a man, there

is no longer any fixed point of leverage, and one can no longer either conquer or maintain any real right. In order to lift others out of a quagmire one must stand on firm ground oneself, and if, hoping the better to assist others, you go into the quagmire, you will not pull others out, but will yourself sink in.

It may be very desirable and useful to get an eight-hour day legalized by Parliament, or to get a liberal program for school libraries sanctioned by your Committee; but if, as a means to this end, a member of Parliament must publicly lift up his hand and lie, lie when taking an oath, by expressing in words respect for what he does not respect; or (in our own case) if, in order to pass most liberal programs, it is necessary to take part in public worship, to be sworn, to wear a uniform, to write mendacious and flattering petitions, and to make speeches of a similar character, etc., — then by doing these things and forgoing our dignity as men, we lose much more than we gain, and by trying to reach one definite aim (which very often is not reached) we deprive ourselves of the possibility of reaching other aims which are of supreme importance. Only people who have something which they will on no account and under no circumstances yield can resist a government and curb it. To have power to resist you must stand on firm ground.

And the government knows this very well, and is concerned, above all else, to worm out of men that which will not yield, in other words, the dignity of man. When that is wormed out of them, government calmly proceeds to do what it likes, knowing that it will no longer meet any real resistance. A man who consents publicly to swear, pronouncing the degrading and mendacious words of the oath; or submissively to wait several hours, dressed up in a uniform, at a minister's reception; or to inscribe himself as a special constable for the coronation; or to fast and receive communion for respectability's sake; or to ask of the head censor whether he may, or may not, express such and such thoughts, etc., — such a man is no longer feared by government.

Alexander II. said he did not fear the Liberals because

he knew they could all be bought, if not with money, then with honors.

People who take part in government, or work under its direction, may deceive themselves or their sympathizers by making a show of struggling; but those against whom they struggle — the government — know quite well, by the strength of the resistance experienced, that these people are not really pulling, but are only pretending to. And our government knows this with respect to the Liberals, and constantly tests the quality of the opposition, and finding that genuine resistance is practically non-existent, it continues its course in full assurance that it can do what it likes with such opponents.

The government of Alexander III. knew this very well, and, knowing it, deliberately destroyed all that the Liberals thought they had achieved and were so proud of. It altered and limited trial by jury; it abolished the "Judges of the Peace"; it canceled the rights of the universities; it perverted the whole system of instruction in the high schools; it reëstablished the cadet corps, and even the state's sale of intoxicants; it established the Zemsky Nachalniks; it legalized flogging; it almost abolished the local government boards (*Zemstvos*); it gave uncontrolled power to the governors of provinces; it encouraged the quartering of troops (*eksekutsia*) on the peasants in punishment; it increased the practice of "administrative"[1] banishment and imprisonment, and the capital punishment of political offenders; it renewed religious persecutions; it brought to a climax the use of barbarous superstitions; it legalized murder in duels; under the name of a "state of siege"[2] it established lawless-

[1] Sentenced by "*Administrative Order*" means sentenced by the arbitrary will of government, or the chief of the gendarmes of a province. Administrative sentences are often inflicted without the victim being heard in his own defense, or even knowing what acts (real or supposed) have led to his punishment. — Tr.

[2] The "Statute of Increased Protection," usually translated "state of siege," was first applied to Petersburg and Moscow only, but was subsequently extended to Odessa, Kief, Kharkof, and Warsaw. Under this

ness with capital punishment, as a normal condition of things, — and in all this it met with no protest except from one honorable woman[1] who boldly told the government the truth as she saw it.

The Liberals whispered among themselves that these things displeased them, but they continued to take part in legal proceedings, and in the local governments, and in the universities, and in government service, and on the press. In the press they hinted at what they were allowed to hint at, and kept silence on matters they had to be silent about, but they printed whatever they were told to print. So that every reader (who was not privy to the whisperings of the editorial rooms), on receiving a Liberal paper or magazine, read the announcement of the most cruel and irrational measure unaccompanied by comment or sign of disapproval, sycophantic and flattering addresses to those guilty of enacting these measures, and frequently even praise of the measures themselves. Thus all the dismal activity of the government of Alexander III., — destroying whatever good had begun to take root in the days of Alexander II., and striving to turn Russia back to the barbarity of the commencement of this century, — all this dismal activity of gallows, rods, persecutions, and stupefaction of the people has become (even in the liberal papers and magazines) the basis of an insane laudation of Alexander III. and of his acclamation as a great man and a model of human dignity.

This same thing is being continued in the new reign. The young man who succeeded the late Tsar, having no understanding of life, was assured, by the men in power to whom it was profitable to say so, that the best way to rule a hundred million people is to do as his father did, *i.e.* not to ask advice from any one but

law the power of capital punishment was intrusted to the governor-generals of the provinces in question. — Tr.

[1] Madame Tsebrikof, a well-known writer and literary critic, wrote a polite but honest letter to Alexander III., pointing out what was being done by the government. She was banished to a distant province for a time and was then allowed to reside, not in Petersburg, but in the government of Tver. — Tr.

just to do what comes into one's head, or what the first flatterer about him advises. And, fancying that unlimited autocracy is a sacred life-principle of the Russian people, the young man begins to reign; and, instead of asking the representatives of the Russian people to help him with their advice in the task of ruling (about which he, educated in a cavalry regiment, knows nothing, and can know nothing), he rudely and insolently shouts at those representatives of the Russian people who visit him with congratulations, and he calls the desire, timidly expressed by some of them,[1] to be allowed to inform the authorities of their needs, "nonsensical fancies."

And what followed? Was Russian society shocked? Did enlightened and honest people — the Liberals — express their indignation and repulsion? Did they at least refrain from laudation of this government and from participating in it and encouraging it? Not at all. From that time a specially intense competition in adulation commenced, both of the father and of the son who imitated him. And not a protesting voice was heard, except in one anonymous letter, cautiously expressing disapproval of the young Tsar's conduct. And, from all sides, fulsome and flattering addresses were brought to the Tsar, as well as (for some reason or other) ikons,[2] which nobody wanted and which served merely as objects of idolatry to benighted people. An insane expenditure of money, the coronation, amazing in its absurdity, was arranged; the arrogance of the rulers and their contempt of the people caused thousands to perish in a fearful calamity, which was regarded as a slight eclipse of the festivities, which should not terminate on that account.[3]

[1] By the representatives of the Tver Zemstvo and others, at a reception in the Winter Palace on the accession of Nicholas II. — Tr.

[2] Conventional painting of God, Jesus, Angels, Saints, the Mother of God, etc., usually done on bits of wood, with much gilding. They are hung up in the corners of the rooms as well as in churches, etc., to be prayed to. — Tr.

[3] As part of the coronation festivities a "people's fête" was arranged to take place on the Khodinskoye Field, near Moscow. Owing to the incredible stupidity of the arrangements, some three thousand people were

An exhibition[1] was organized, which no one wanted except those who organized it, and which cost millions of rubles. In the Chancery of the Holy Synod, with unparalleled effrontery, a new and supremely stupid means of mystifying people was devised, viz., the enshrinement of the incorruptible body of a saint whom nobody knew anything about.[2] The stringency of the censor was increased. Religious persecution was made more severe. The "state of siege," *i.e.* the legalization of lawlessness, was continued, and the state of things is still becoming worse and worse.

And I think that all this would not have happened if those enlightened, honest people, who are now occupied in Liberal activity on the basis of legality, in local governments, in the committees, in censor-ruled literature, etc., had not devoted their energies to the task of circumventing the government, and, without abandoning the forms it has itself arranged, of finding ways to make it act so as to harm and injure itself;[3] but, abstaining from taking any part in government or in any business bound up with government, had merely claimed their rights as men.

"You wish, instead of 'Judges of the Peace,' to institute Zemsky Nachalniks with birch rods; that is your business, but we will not go to law before your Zemsky Nachalniks, and will not ourselves accept appointment to such an office: you wish to make trial by jury a mere formality; that is your business, but we will not serve

killed when trying to enter the grounds, besides a large number who were injured. This occurred on Saturday, May 18 (O. S.), 1896. That same evening the emperor danced at the grand ball given by the French ambassador in Moscow. — Tr.

[1] The unsuccessful exhibition at Nizhni in 1896. — Tr.

[2] The "incorruptible" body of Saint Theodosius was exhibited to the people and to the pilgrims who assembled from all parts of Russia, and was then enshrined with great pomp in the Cathedral of Chernigof in 1896. These relics duly performed miracles, which were fully reported in the official papers, and none of the papers ventured to express any doubt as to the genuine nature of the whole performance. — Tr.

[3] Sometimes it seems to me simply laughable that people can occupy themselves with such an evidently hopeless business; it is like undertaking to cut off an animal's leg without its noticing it. — Author's Note.

as judges, or as advocates, or as jurymen: you wish, under the name of a 'state of siege,' to establish despotism; that is your business, but we will not participate in it, and will plainly call the 'state of siege' despotism, and capital punishment inflicted without trial, murder: you wish to organize cadet corps, or classical high schools, in which military exercises and the Orthodox faith are taught; that is your affair, but we will not teach in such schools, or send our children to them, but will educate our children as seems to us right: you decide to reduce the local government boards (*zemstvos*) to impotence; we will not take part in it: you prohibit the publication of literature that displeases you; you may seize books and punish the printers, but you cannot prevent our speaking and writing, and we shall continue to do so: you demand an oath of allegiance to the Tsar; we will not accede to what is so stupid, false, and degrading: you order us to serve in the army; we will not do so, because wholesale murder is as opposed to our conscience as individual murder, and above all, because the promise to murder whomsoever a commander may tell us to murder is the meanest act a man can commit: you profess a religion which is a thousand years behind the times, with an 'Iberian Mother of God,'[1] relics, and coronations; that is your affair, but we do not acknowledge idolatry and superstition to be religion, but call them idolatry and superstition, and we try to free people from them."

And what can government do against such activity? It can banish or imprison a man for preparing a bomb, or even for printing a proclamation to working-men; it can transfer your "Literature Committee" from one ministry to another, or close a Parliament, — but what can a government do with a man who is not willing

[1] "The Iberian Mother of God" is a wonder-working ikon of the Virgin Mary which draws a large revenue. It is frequently taken to visit the sick, and travels about with six horses; the attendant priest sits in the carriage bareheaded. The smallest fee charged is six shillings for a visit, but more is usually given. — TR.

publicly to lie with uplifted hand, or who is not willing to send his children to an establishment which he considers bad, or who is not willing to learn to kill people, or is not willing to take part in idolatry, or is not willing to take part in coronations, deputations, and addresses, or who says and writes what he thinks and feels? By prosecuting such a man, government secures for him general sympathy, making him a martyr, and it undermines the foundations on which it is itself built, for in so acting, instead of protecting human rights, it itself infringes them.

And it is only necessary for all those good, enlightened, and honest people, whose strength is now wasted in revolutionary, socialistic, or liberal activity, harmful to themselves and to their cause, to begin to act thus, and a nucleus of honest, enlightened, and moral people would form around them, united in the same thoughts and the same feelings; and to this nucleus the ever wavering crowd of average people would at once gravitate, and public opinion — the only power which subdues governments — would become evident, demanding freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, justice, and humanity. And as soon as public opinion was formulated, not only would it be impossible to close the "Literature Committee," but all those inhuman organizations — the "state of siege," the secret police, the censor, Schlüsselburg,[1] the Holy Synod, and the rest — against which the revolutionists and the liberals are now struggling would disappear of themselves.

So that two methods of opposing the government have been tried, both unsuccessfully, and it now remains to try a third and a last method, one not yet tried, but one which, I think, cannot but be successful. Briefly, that means this: that all enlightened and honest people should try to be as good as they can, and not even good in all respects, but only in one; namely, in observing one of the most elementary virtues — to be honest, and not to lie, but to act and speak

[1] The most terrible of the places of imprisonment in Petersburg; the Russian Bastile. — Tr.

so that your motives should be intelligible to an affectionate seven-year-old boy; to act so that your boy should not say, "But why, papa, did you say so-and-so, and now you do and say something quite different?" This method seems very weak, and yet I am convinced that it is this method, and this method only, that has moved humanity since the race began. Only because there were straight men, truthful and courageous, who made no concessions that infringed their dignity as men, have all those beneficent revolutions been accomplished of which mankind now have the advantage, from the abolition of torture and slavery up to liberty of speech and of conscience. Nor can this be otherwise, for what conscience (the highest forefeeling man possesses of the truth accessible to him) demands, is always, and in all respects, the activity most fruitful and most necessary for humanity at the given time. Only a man who lives according to his conscience can have influence on people, and only activity that accords with one's conscience can be useful.

But I must explain my meaning. To say that the most effectual means of achieving the ends toward which revolutionists and liberals are striving, is by activity in accord with their consciences, does not mean that people can begin to live conscientiously in order to achieve those ends. To begin to live conscientiously on purpose to achieve any external ends is impossible.

To live according to one's conscience is possible only as a result of firm and clear religious convictions; the beneficent result of these in our external life will inevitably follow. Therefore the gist of what I wished to say to you is this: that it is unprofitable for good, sincere people to spend their powers of mind and soul in gaining small practical ends; *e.g.* in the various struggles of nationalities, or parties, or in Liberal wire-pulling, while they have not reached a clear and firm religious perception, *i.e.* a consciousness of the meaning and purpose of their life. I think that all the powers of soul and of mind of good people, who wish to be of

service to men, should be directed to that end. When that is accomplished, all else will be accomplished too.

Forgive me for sending you so long a letter, which perhaps you did not at all need, but I have long wished to express my views on this question. I even began a long article about it, but I shall hardly have time to finish it before death comes, and therefore I wished to get at least part of it said. Forgive me if I am in error about anything.

RELIGION AND MORALITY[1]

YOU ask me — first, What I understand by the word "religion"; and, second, Whether I admit the existence of morality, independent of religion as understood by me.

I will try according to the measure of my ability to answer these highly important questions, well put by you.

There are three separate meanings implied by the word "religion." First — That religion is a certain true revelation given by God to men, from which proceeds the worship of God by men. Such an interpretation is applied to religion by all believers in one of its existing forms, who consequently regard their particular form as the only true one. Second — That religion is a collection of superstitious statements, from which a worship equally superstitious is derived. Such an interpretation is applied to religion by skeptics in general; by those, that is, who do not believe in the religion they are defining. Third — That religion is a compilation of propositions and rules, invented by clever men, and a necessity for the vulgar herd, as much for their consolation as for their subjugation and the restraint of their passions. Such an interpretation is applied to religion by those indifferent to it personally, but who regard it as a useful instrument in the governance of mankind.

By the first definition, religion is an indubitable and irrefragable truth, the propagation of which amongst all men and by every possible means is necessary to the welfare of mankind. By the second, religion is a mass of superstition from which it is desirable, and even needful to the welfare of humanity, that mankind should be

[1] A reply to two questions put by the German Ethical Society.

delivered. By the third, religion is a contrivance useful to humanity, though unnecessary for those of the highest development, but which, as indispensable to the consolation and control of the vulgar, it is needful to maintain.

The first definition is similar to one a man might make of music by defining it as his most familiar and favorite song, with which all the world should be acquainted. The second, in the same connection, would be that applied to music by a man who neither understood nor cared for it, and who called it the production of sound by the throat, mouth, or hands upon certain instruments; a useless and even objectionable occupation, from which it was necessary to wean men as soon as possible. The third is similar to that which a man would apply to music, who considered it a useful contrivance for teaching men to dance or to march, for which purposes it should be maintained.

The difference and narrowness of these definitions arises from their not taking hold of the essence of music, but merely defining its features from the definer's point of view. So is it also with the three definitions of religion. According to the first, religion is whatever the definer thinks that he is right in believing. According to the second, it is that which, in the definer's opinion, people are wrong in believing. According to the third, it is, by the standard of the definer, what men are benefited by believing. All these define, not what constitutes the essence of religion, but the definer's idea of what religion constitutes. The first supplants the notion of religion by the faith of him who defines it; the second, by the faith by which other people regard it; the third, by the faith of men in whatever may be supplied them as religion.

But what is faith? Why do people believe in what they believe? What is faith? and whence has it arisen?

Amongst the majority of the educated classes it is regarded as a settled question that the essence of every religion has its origin in the personification, deification,

and worship of the forces of nature — proceeding from superstitious fear of nature's incomprehensible phenomena. This view is blindly accepted, without criticism, by the educated throng of our time, and it not only does not meet with any refutation from men of science, but, for the most part, finds, precisely among them, most definite confirmation. If, indeed, a voice is at times heard, as that of Max Müller, which attributes to religion another origin and sense, its sound is lost in the almost unamimous affirmation that religion is the outcome of ignorance and superstition.

Not long ago, at the beginning of the present century, the most advanced thinkers, while regretting Catholicism, Protestantism, and Greek Orthodoxy, as did the Encyclopedists at the end of the eighteenth, did not deny that religion has been and is an indispensable condition in the lives of all. Not to mention the deists, — as Bernardin de St. Pierre, Diderot, and Rousseau, — Voltaire raised a monument to the Deity, and Robespierre proclaimed a festal day in honor of the Supreme Being. But at the present day, thanks to the frivolous and superficial teaching of Auguste Comte (who sincerely believed, in common with the majority of Frenchmen, that Christianity is nothing but Catholicism, and therefore saw in Catholicism the complete realization of Christianity), the educated throng, which always readily and greedily accepts the lowest view, have decided or conceded that religion is only a certain long-obsolete aspect in the development of humanity which hinders progress. It is agreed that humanity has already outlived two periods, the religious and metaphysical, and has now entered into the third and highest, the scientific, and that all religious phenomena are only the expiring breaths of an outgrown spiritual organ of humanity, once needful, but long ago lost to sense and significance, like the nails on a horse's fifth toe.

It is agreed that religion had its origin in the worship of imaginary beings, evoked by fear of the incomprehensible forces of Nature, as in ancient times thought Democritus, and as is affirmed by the modern philoso-

phers and historians of religion. But, putting aside the fact that the recognition of some unseen and supernatural being or beings has preceded the sense of fear evoked by the unknown forces of Nature, as is proved by hundreds of advanced and learned thinkers of the past, — the Socrates, Descartes, Newtons, and similar men in our own times, who, being in no wise afraid of Nature's blind forces, admitted the existence of some supreme supernatural Being, — the affirmation that religion was the outcome of man's superstitious fear of the incomprehensible powers of Nature in reality does not answer the chief question: From what in man does the idea of an unseen and supernatural being derive existence?

If men were afraid of thunder and lightning, they would fear them as thunder and lightning; but why invent an unseen and supernatural Being, living in certain regions, and occasionally flinging bolts at men?

If men were astounded by the aspect of death, they would fear to die; but why should they invent souls of the dead with whom to enter into imaginary communion? On account of thunder men might hide; on account of the fear of death they might flee from it; but instead they devised an eternal, all-powerful Being, on whom they reckon themselves dependent, and the living souls of the dead — not from fear alone, but for some other reasons. And in these reasons, evidently, lies the essence of what is called religion.

Moreover, every man who has ever, if only in childhood, felt the religious sentiment, knows from his own experience that such a sentiment has always been awakened in him, not by external, terrifying, material phenomena, but by an internal consciousness of his own frailty, solitude, and sinfulness, and connected not at all with any dread of the unknown forces of Nature. Hence man may, both by external observation and by personal experience, ascertain that religion is not the worship of deities, evoked by superstitious fear of unknown natural forces, and only proper to mankind at a certain period of its development, but something independent altogether of fear, or of a degree of culture, and not liable

to destruction by any access of enlightenment; just as man's consciousness of his finality in the infinite universe, and of his sinfulness (*i.e.* his non-fulfilment of all he might and ought to have done), always has existed and always will exist while man remains man.

In truth, every man, as soon as he emerges from the animal existence of infancy and childhood, — during which he lives by the pressure of those claims which are presented to him by his animal nature, — every man who is awake to reasonable consciousness cannot fail to remark how the life about him renews itself, undestroyed, and steadfastly subordinate to one definite eternal law; and that he alone, self-recognized as a creature separate from the entire universe, is condemned to death, to a disappearance in unbounded space and limitless time, and to the painful consciousness of responsibility for his actions — a consciousness, so to say, that, not having acted well, he might have acted better. And, with this understanding, every reasoning man must stop, think, and ask himself — wherefore this momentary, indefinite, unstable existence within a universe uncompassed, eternal, firmly defined?

Man cannot, when he enters into his full measure of life, elude this question. It confronts all, and all in some fashion answer it, and it is this answer which is the essence of religion, the answer to the question, Wherefore do I live, and what is my relation to the infinite universe about me? All religious metaphysics, — their teaching as to deities, the origin of existence, external worship, — though generally taken for religion, are only the various labels accompanying religion, and changing with a change in its geographical, historical, or ethnographical conditions. There is no religion, however cultured, however crude, but has its beginnings in the assessment of the relations of man to the surrounding universe or to its first cause. There is no ceremony of religion so rustic, nor ritual so refined, which has not a like foundation. All the teaching of religion is the expression of the relations in which the founder of the religion regards himself — and therefore all mankind —

as standing toward the universe or toward its origin and first cause.

The expressions of these relations are very numerous, and depend on the conditions of race and time in which the founder of the religion and those appropriating it are placed. Moreover, these expressions are variously misinterpreted and deformed by the founder's disciples, who, often for hundreds, sometimes for thousands, of years are in advance of the understanding of the masses. Hence, many accounts of this relation of man to the universe or its first cause, called religions, appear to exist, but in substance there are only three of an essential quality: (1) the primitive personal relation; (2) the heathen social family, or state relation; (3) the Christian, or divine relation. Strictly speaking, man can be related to the universe in only two ways: the *personal*, which is the recognition of life as the welfare of the individual, separately or in union with others; and the *Christian*, which is the recognition of life as the service of Him who sent man into the world. The social relation of man to the universe is merely an enlargement of the personal.

The first of these recognitions (or perceptions), which is the most ancient, and which is now found only amongst men of the lowest order of development, consists in the consideration by man of himself as a self-sufficient being, existing with the sole purpose of obtaining for himself the greatest possible amount of personal happiness from the world about him, indifferent to the amount of suffering thus entailed on other creatures. From this early conception of a relation to the universe — which suffices for every child, as it sufficed for humanity on the threshold of its development, and still satisfies many savage tribes and men of a coarse moral fiber — have proceeded all the ancient heathen religions, as well as the corrupt and lower forms of more recent religions, as Buddhism,[1] Taoism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity in its perverted issues. To this same

[1] Buddhism, although it demands from its disciples resignation of all the pleasures of the world, and even of life itself, is founded on the same idea

perception the more modern spiritism owes its origin, being founded on the preservation and welfare of the individual. All heathen superstitions, divination, deification of beings in blissful existence with the attributes of men, or of saints interceding for man, all sacrifices and supplications for earthly advantages or protection from calamity, proceed from the same conception of life.

The second or social heathen conception of man's relation to the universe, established in the next stage of development and natural to the state of manhood, consists in the admission that the meaning of life is to be discovered, not in the happiness of individuals, but in the welfare of a certain association of them, as the family, tribe, state, nation, even humanity, according to the attempted religion of the Positivists. In this perception, the attention is transferred from the individual to the family, tribe, state, or nation — that is, to an association of individuals, the welfare of whom is, in this case, regarded as the object of existence. All patriarchal and social religions of a like character have their origin in this conception: the religions of the Chinese, Japanese, of the chosen people — the Jews, the State religion of the Romans, our own religion of Church and State, debased to this connection by Augustine, though wrongly called Christian, and the Positivists' hypothetical religion of humanity. Ancestor-worship in China and Japan, emperor-worship in Rome, the manifold ceremonies of the Jews to preserve their covenant with God, all family, social, Church, Christian *Te Deums* for the welfare of the State and for military success, are founded on this same conception of the relation of man to the universe.

The third conception of this relation — the Christian one — of which every man of advanced years is involuntarily conscious, and upon which humanity, in my

of an individual sufficient for himself, and predestined to happiness, or rather — in comparison with the right of man to enjoyment as proclaimed by positive heathenism — to the absence of pain. Heathenism holds that the universe should serve the interest of the individual, Buddhism that the universe must be dissolved as the producing factor in the miseries of mankind. Buddhism is only negative heathenism. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

opinion, is now entering, consists in the acknowledgment by man that the meaning of life is not to be found in the attainment of his own individual aim, nor in the attainment of that of any association of individuals, but solely in serving that Supreme Will, which has produced man, and the entire universe for the attainment, not of the aims of man, but of the Superior Will which has produced him. From this conception, the loftiest religious teaching known to us has proceeded, germs of which existed in the teaching of the Pythagoreans, Essenes, Egyptians, Persians, Brahmans, Buddhists, and Taoists, in their best representatives, but which has received its final and fullest expression only in the true, unperverted interpretation of Christianity. All the ritual of those ancient religions, proceeding from this conception of life, all the modern external forms of association of the Unitarians, Universalists, Quakers, Austrian-Nazarenes and Russian Dukhobors,[1] and all so-called rationalistic sects, their sermons, hymns, intercourse, and books, are religious manifestations of this conception of man's relation to the universe.

All possible religions of every kind are inevitably distributed between these three conceptions. Every man who has emerged from the animal condition must invariably adopt one of these conceptions of his relation to the universe, and in this adoption consists the real religion of every man, outside any confession of faith to which he may nominally adhere. Every man inevitably, one way or another, pictures to himself his own relation to the universe, because a reasoning being cannot live in the world without some sort of consciousness of his relation to it. And as only three explanations of this relation have been produced by humanity, and are known to us, every man must inevitably hold by one of the three, and, whether he will or not, belongs to one of the three fundamental religions, among which all humanity may be divided. And hence the general as-

[1] Spirit-wrestlers: a section of the so-called *raskolniks* or sectarians, having a spiritual conception of life and the gospels, and who claim to fight against the flesh by aid of the Spirit.

sertion made by men of culture in the Christian world that they have reached the summit of development where they neither have nor need a religion, only means that, renouncing Christianity, the one religion proper to our time, they hold either with the social-family-state religion, or with that of primitive heathendom, without being aware of the tendency themselves. A man without a religion — that is, without any perceptive relation to the universe — is as impossible as a man without a heart. He may be as unaware of the possession of one as of the other, but neither without a heart, nor without a religion can man exist. Religion is the relation which man acknowledges toward the universe about him, or to its source and first cause, and a reasoning man must perforce be in some sort of perceptive relationship to it.

But you may perhaps say that the invention of man's relation to the universe is a subject not for religion, but for philosophy, or, in general, for science, allowing that the latter term is more inclusive. I do not think so. I hold, on the contrary, that the supposition that science in its widest sense, including philosophy, should concern itself with the relation of man to the universe is altogether erroneous, and the chief source of disorder in the ideas of our educated society as to religion, science, and morality. Science, including philosophy, cannot institute any comparison as to the relation of mankind to the infinite universe or to its source, if only because, before any sort of science or of philosophy could have been formulated, that conception of some sort of relationship of man to the universe, without which no kind of mental activity is possible, must have existed. As a man cannot by any kind of movement discover the direction in which he must move, but all movement is made imperatively in some given direction, so it is impossible, by the mental efforts of philosophy or of science, to discover the direction in which this effort should be made; but every mental effort is inevitably accomplished in some direction which has been already given it. And this direction for all mental effort is always indicated by religion. All philosophies known to us,

from Plato to Schopenhauer, have followed inevitably the direction given by religion.

The philosophy of Plato and of his followers was a heathen system to procure the maximum of happiness, as well for the individual as for the association of individuals in the form of a state. The Church-Christian philosophy of the Middle Ages, based on the same heathen conception of existence, investigated means of salvation for the individual, — that is, the means for procuring his best advantage in a future life, — and only in its theocratic endeavors did it touch on the welfare of societies. The modern philosophy of Hegel, as well as that of Comte, is founded on the state-social-religious conception of existence. The pessimistic philosophy of Schopenhauer and Hartmann, which desired to free itself from the Jewish religious conception, became unwittingly subject to the basis of Buddhism. Philosophy always has been and always will be merely the investigation of the results of the perceptive relations of man to the universe inculcated by religion, for until this perception is acquired there is no material for philosophical investigation.

The same explanation holds good with positive science in the strict meaning of the term. Such a science always has been, and always will be, merely the investigation and determination of such objects and phenomena as appear to demand inquiry in consequence of a certain conception instituted by religion as to the relation of man to the universe. Science always has been, and always will be, not the study of "everything," as men of science at present naïvely imagine (a thing which is, moreover, impossible, as the subjects in the scope of study are of infinite quantity), but only of those things which, in order and according to their degree of importance, religion selects from the infinite objects, phenomena, and circumstances into which inquiry may be made. And hence there is not one science, but as many sciences as there are religions.

Each religion selects a certain circle of subjects which must be studied, and hence the science of every time

and nation inevitably bears the character of its religion in the point of view from which its examination is made. So the heathen science, reinstituted at the Renaissance and flourishing at present among us under the title of Christian, always has been and continues to be merely an investigation of the circumstances by which man may attain the highest welfare, and of those phenomena of the universe which may be put under contribution to the same end. The philosophical science of Brahman and Buddhist has always been merely the investigation of circumstances by which man may be delivered from the miseries which oppress him. The Jewish science (the Talmud) has always been the study and explanation of those conditions which must be observed by man in order to ratify his covenant with God, and to preserve the chosen nation at the highest level of its election. The Church-Christian science was and is the investigation of those circumstances by which man procures his salvation. The true Christian science, that which is but just at the birth, is the investigation of those circumstances by which man may become acquainted with the demands of the Supreme Will, whose instrument he is, and how he may fit them to his existence.

Neither philosophy nor science can institute man's relation to the universe, because such reciprocity must have existence before any kind of science or philosophy can begin; since each investigates phenomena by means of the intellect, and independent of the position or sensations of the investigator; whereas the relation of man to the universe is defined, not by the intellect alone, but by his sensitive perception aided by all his spiritual powers. However much one may assure and instruct a man that all real existence is an idea, that matter is made up of atoms, that the essence of life is corporality or will, that heat, light, movement, electricity are different manifestations of one and the same energy, one cannot thereby explain to a being with pains, pleasures, fears, and hopes, his position in the universe. That position and his consequent relation to the universe is explained only by

religion, which says, "The universe exists for thee, and therefore take from life all that thou canst obtain;" or else, "Thou art one of the chosen people of God; serve that people, and accomplish the instructions of that God, and thou and thy people shall be partakers of the highest bliss;" or else, "Thou art the instrument of a supreme will, which has sent thee into the universe to accomplish a work predestined for thee; learn that will, and do it, for that is the sole perfection thou canst achieve."

To understand philosophy and science one needs study and preparation, but neither is required for the understanding of religion; that is at once comprehensible to every man whatever his ignorance and limitations. A man need acquire neither philosophy nor science to understand his relation to the universe, or to its source; a superfluity of knowledge, encumbering his consciousness, is rather an impediment; but he must renounce, if only for the time, the vanity of the world, and acquire a sense of his material frailty and of truth, which are, as the Gospels tell us, to be found most often in children and in the simplest, most unlearned, of men. For this reason we see the most simple, ignorant, and untaught men accept clearly, consciously, and easily the highest Christian conception of life, whereas the most learned and cultured linger in crude heathenism. As, for example, we observe men of refinement and education whose conception of existence is the acquirement of personal pleasure or security from pain, as with the shrewd and cultured Schopenhauer, or in the salvation of the soul by sacraments and means of grace, as with learned bishops of the Church; whereas an almost illiterate sectarian peasant in Russia, without the slightest mental effort, achieves the same conception of life as was accomplished by the greatest sages of the world — Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca — namely, the consciousness of one's being as the instrument of the will of God — the son of God.

But you may ask me: In what, then, does the

essence of this unscientific and unphilosophical knowledge consist? If it be neither scientific nor philosophical, of what sort is it? How is it to be defined?

To these questions I can only reply that as religious knowledge is that which precedes, and upon which is founded, every other knowledge, it cannot be defined, there being no essential term of definition in existence. In theological language this knowledge is called revelation. And this word, if we do not give it any mystic meaning, is quite accurate; because this knowledge is not acquired by study, or by the efforts of individuals, but through the reception by them of the manifestation of the Infinite Mind, which, little by little, discloses itself to men. Why is it that ten thousand years ago men were unable to understand that their sentient existence was not exhausted by the welfare of the individual, and that later came a time when the higher family-social-state-national conception of life was disclosed to mankind? Why is it that, within the limits of historical memory, the Christian conception of life has been disclosed to men? And why has it been disclosed to such a man or men, and precisely at such a time, at such and no other place, in such and no other form?

To try to answer these questions by searching for their reasons in the historical circumstances of the time, life, and character and special qualities of those men who first accepted and expressed this conception of life, is as if one were to try to prove why the rising sun first casts his rays on certain objects. The sun of truth, rising higher and higher upon the world, enlightens it ever further, and is reflected by those forms on which first fall the illumination of its rays and which are most capable of reflecting them. The qualities which give to some the power of receiving the rising truth are no special activities of the mind, but rather passive qualities of the heart, seldom corresponding to a great and inquisitive intellect. Rejection of the vanities of the world, a sense of one's material frailty, truthfulness, are what we observe in every

founder of a religion, none of whom have been distinguished by philosophical or scientific acquirement.

In my opinion the chief error, which, more than all else, impedes the true progress of Christian humanity, is precisely the fact that the scientific men of our time, who are now in the seat of the teachers, being guided by the heathen conception of life revived at the Renaissance, and having accepted as the essence of Christianity its crudest distortions, and having decided that it is a condition already outworn by mankind (while they consider, on the contrary, that the ancient social-state conception of heathendom, which is indeed outworn, is the loftiest conception and one that should steadfastly be held by humanity), these men, not only do not understand true Christianity, which comprises that most perfect conception of life toward which all humanity is advancing, but they do not even try to understand it.

The chief source of this misunderstanding arises from the fact that men of science, having diverged from Christianity, and seen that their science cannot conform to it, have agreed that Christianity and not science must be at fault; that is, they have assumed, not the fact that science is eighteen hundred years behind Christianity, which embraced the greater part of contemporary society, but that it is Christianity which is eighteen hundred years in arrears. From this distortion of facts arises the curious circumstance that no people have more entangled ideas as to the essence of true knowledge, religion, morality, and existence than men of science, and the still more curious fact that the science of our time, despite all its successes in examining the phenomena of the material world, appears to be, as to human existence, either unnecessary or productive of merely pernicious results. And hence I hold that it is neither philosophy nor science which can explain the relation of man to the universe, but religion.

And so I answer your first question, as to what I understand by the word "religion," thus: Religion is the conception by man of the relation between him-

self and the eternal, infinite universe, its origin and source.

Out of this reply to your first question follows naturally that to the second.

If religion is the conception by man of his relation to the universe, the determining idea of his life, morality is the index and explanation of man's activity which naturally flows from this or the other relation to the universe. And as we recognize only two of these fundamental relations to the universe or its first cause, if we include the heathen-social as the enlargement of the personal relation, or three if we consider it apart, so there exist but three moral teachings: the primitive, savage, individualistic; the heathen-family-state or social; and the Christian or divine, teaching man's subservience to the universe or to God.

From the first conception of man's relationship to the universe proceeds the morality common to all heathen religions, and having for its foundation the welfare of the individual, and, therefore, defining every condition capable of producing that welfare and the means by which it may be procured. From this idea of man's relationship to the universe have proceeded various moral teachings: the Epicurean in its lowest manifestation; the Mohammedan, promising the individual gross pleasures in this and the next world; the Church-Christian, with salvation for its object — that is, the welfare of the individual in the world to come; and the utilitarian, having for its object the welfare of the individual in this world alone. From this same conception, which proclaims the welfare of the individual, and hence his immunity from pain, as the object of his existence, proceed the Buddhist morality in its crudest aspect and the teaching of the pessimists.

From the second conception, which proclaims the welfare of a certain association of individuals as the object of existence, proceed those moral teachings which demand from mankind subservience to that particular association the welfare of which is accepted as the aim of life. According to this morality, such amount of per-

sonal welfare is alone permitted as may be procurable for the entire association which forms the religious base of existence. From this conception of man's relation to the universe proceed such moral teachings of the Greek and Roman world as are known to us, in which the individual is always sacrificed to society; the moral teaching of China; the Jewish morality of personal subjection to the welfare of the chosen people; and the Church-State-moral teaching of our own time which demands the sacrifice of the individual to the welfare of the State. From this same conception proceeds also the morality of the majority of women, sacrificing their individuality to the welfare of the family, and especially of their children.

All ancient history, and in part that of the Middle Ages, and of the modern era, is full of the exploits of this family, social, and state morality. And, at the present time, most men only imagine they profess Christianity and hold the Christian morality, but in reality they follow this family-state morality of heathendom. And this morality they elevate into an ideal in the education of the young.

From the third conception of man's relation to the universe — namely, the acknowledgment by man of his existence as an instrument of the Supreme Will for the accomplishment of its designs — proceeds the morality corresponding to this conception, which explains the dependence of man on the Supreme Will, and determines the demands of this Will. From this conception proceed the loftiest moral teachings known to man — the Pythagorean, Stoic, Buddhist, Brahman, and Taoist, in their best aspects, and the Christian teaching in its real sense, which demands the renunciation of the individual will, and of the welfare, not only of the individual, but of family, society, and state, in the name of the fulfilment of the will of Him who sent us into life and made it known to us through our consciousness.

From the second or third of these perceptions of man's relationship to the infinite universe or its first cause, proceeds the true, sincere morality of every man, in spite

of what he nominally professes or preaches as morality, or what he desires to appear. So that a man who acknowledges that the essence of his relation to the universe consists in the acquirement of the greatest welfare for himself, however much he may prate of the morality of living for family, society, state, humanity, or the accomplishment of the will of God (though he may be clever enough by feigning to deceive his fellows), the real motive of his activity will always be his own welfare; so that, when necessity for choice arises, he will sacrifice, not himself for his family, nation, or the accomplishment of God's will, but everything for himself, because his conception of existence being centered in his own welfare, he cannot act otherwise till the conception of his relation to the universe undergoes a change.

In the same way, however much a man, whose conception of his relation to the universe consists in the service of his family (as is the case with most women), tribe, country, or nation (as those of oppressed nationalities, or political agents in times of contention), may say that he is a Christian, his morality will always remain a family, national, or state morality, not a Christian; and when the necessity arises for choosing between the welfare of family or of society and that of himself, or between social welfare and the accomplishment of God's will, he will inevitably choose to serve the welfare of that association of his fellows for which he, according to his conception of life, exists; because only in such service does he discover the meaning of his existence.

And, similarly, however much you may assure a man, who considers that his relation to the universe consists in the accomplishment of the will of Him that sent him, that he must, in the interest of person, family, state, nation, or humanity, do that which contradicts this superior will, of which he is conscious through the reason and love with which he is equipped, he will always sacrifice person, family, country, or humanity rather than be unfaithful to the will of Him that sent him, because only by the accomplishment of this will does he realize his conception of life.

Morality cannot be independent of religion, because, not only is it the outcome of religion, — that is, of that conception by man of his relation to the universe, — but because it is already implied by religion. All religion is a reply to the question, What is my conception of life? And the religious answer always includes a certain moral demand, which may sometimes follow the explanation of this conception, sometimes precede it. The question may be answered thus: The conception of life is the welfare of the individual, therefore profit by every advantage accessible to thee; or, The conception of life is the welfare of an association, serve therefore that association with all thy power; or, The conception of life is the fulfilment of the will of Him that sent thee, therefore try, with all thy power, to learn that will and to do it. And the same question may be answered thus: The conception of life is thy personal pleasure, in that is the true destiny of man; or, The conception of life is the service of that association of which thou considerest thyself a member, for that is thy destiny; or, The conception of life is the service of God, since for that thou hast been made.

Morality is included in the explanation of life that religion offers us, and therefore cannot possibly be divorced from it. This truth is especially prominent in those attempts of non-Christian philosophers to deduce the inculcation of the loftiest morality from their philosophy. These teachers see that Christian morality is indispensable; that existence without it is impossible; more, they see that such a morality does exist, and they desire in some manner to attach it to their non-Christian philosophy, and even so to represent things that it may appear as if Christian morality were the natural outcome of their heathen or social philosophy. And they make the attempt, but their very efforts exhibit more clearly than anything else, not only the independence of Christian morality, but its complete contradiction of the philosophy of individual welfare, of escape from personal suffering, of the welfare of society.

Christian ethics, that system of which we become con-

scious by a religious conception of life, demand not only the sacrifice of personality to society, but of one's own person and any aggregation of persons to the service of God. Whereas heathen philosophy, investigating the means by which the welfare of the individual or of an association of individuals may be achieved, inevitably contradicts the Christian ideal. Heathen philosophy has but one method for concealing this discrepancy: it heaps up abstract conditional ideas, one upon the other, and refuses to emerge from the misty region of metaphysics. Chiefly after this manner was the behavior of the philosophers of the Renaissance, and to this circumstance — namely, the impossibility of reconciling the demands of Christian morality already recognized as existing, with philosophy upon a heathen basis — one must attribute that dreary abstraction, incomprehensibility, estrangement from life, and want of charity of the new philosophy. With the exception of Spinoza, whose philosophy proceeded from a religious and truly Christian basis, although he is not commonly reckoned a Christian, and of Kant, a gifted genius who resolutely conducted his ethics independently of his metaphysics; with these two exceptions, every other philosopher, even the brilliant Schopenhauer, manifestly devised artificial connections between their ethics and their metaphysics.

One feels that the system of Christian ethics has an original and firmly established standpoint independent of philosophy, and needing not at all the fictitious props placed beneath it, and that philosophy invents such statements not only to avoid an appearance of contradiction, but apparently to involve a natural connection and outcome.

But all these statements seem to justify Christian ethics only while they are considered in the abstract. The moment they are fitted to questions of practical existence, then not only does their disagreement become visible in all its force, but the contradiction between the philosopical basis and that which we regard as morality is made manifest. The unhappy Nietzsche, who has lately become so celebrated, is especially noticeable as

an example of this contradiction. He is irrefutable when he says that all rules of morality, from the standpoint of the existent non-Christian philosophy, are nothing but falsehood and hypocrisy, and that it is much more advantageous, pleasant, and reasonable for a man to be a member of the society of *Uebermenschen*, than to be one of a crowd which must serve as a scaffold for that society. No combinations of a philosophy which proceeds from the heathen-religious conception of life can prove to a man that it will be more advantageous and more reasonable for him to live, not for his own desired, attainable, and conceivable welfare, or for the welfare of his family and society, but for another's welfare, which, as far as he is concerned, may be undesirable, inconceivable, and unattainable by insufficient human means. That philosophy which is founded on man's welfare as the ideal of existence can never prove to reasoning beings, with the ever-present consciousness of death, that it is fitting for him to renounce his own desirable, conceivable, and certain welfare, not for the certain welfare of others — for he can never know the results of his sacrifice — but merely because it is right that he should do so; that it is the categorical imperative.

It is impossible to prove this from the heathen-philosophical standpoint. In order to prove that men are all equal, that it is better for a man to sacrifice his own life in the service of others, than to make his fellows serve him, trampling upon their lives, it is necessary for a man to determine his relation to the universe in some other way; it must be shown that the position of a man is such that he is left no other course, because the meaning of his life is to be found only in the accomplishment of the will of Him that sent him, and that the will of Him that sent him is — that he should give his life to the service of mankind. And such a modification in man's perception of his relation to the universe is wrought only by religion.

So, too, is it with the attempt to deduce Christian morality from, and to harmonize it with, the fundamen-

tal propositions of heathen science. No sophisms or mental subterfuges will destroy the simple and clear proposition, that the law of evolution, laid as the basis of all the science of our time, is founded upon a general, unchangeable, and eternal law, — that of the struggle for existence, and of the survival of the "fittest," — and that, therefore, every man, for the attainment of his own welfare, or of that of his society, must be this fittest,[1] or make his society the fittest in order that neither he nor his society should perish, but another less fit. However much some naturalists, alarmed by the logical inferences of this law, and by its adaptation to human existence, may strive to extinguish it with words and talk it down, its irrefutability becomes only the more manifest by their efforts, and its control over the life of the entire organic world, and hence over that of man, regarded as an animal.

While I am writing this, the Russian translation of an article by Professor Huxley has been published, consisting of an address which he delivered not long ago before a certain English society on evolution and ethics.

In this article the learned professor — as did some years ago, too, our eminent Professor Beketof as unsuccessfully as his predecessors — tries to prove that the struggle for existence does not violate morality, and that, alongside the acceptance of the law of this struggle for existence, as the fundamental law of life, morality may not only exist, but may improve. Mr. Huxley's article is full of all kinds of jokes, verses, and general views upon the religion and philosophy of the ancients, and therefore is so shock-headed and entangled that only with great pains can one arrive at the fundamental idea.

This, however, is as follows: The law of evolution is contrary to the law of morality; this was known to the ancient world of Greece and India. And the philosophy and religion of both nations led them to the teaching of self-abnegation. This teaching, according to the author's opinion, is not correct; but the right one is the following: a law exists, termed by the author "the

[1] English in the original.

cosmic law," [1] according to which all creatures struggle amongst themselves, and only the fittest survives. Man is subordinate to this law, and, thanks to it, has become what he now is. But this law is contrary to morality. How, then, are we to reconcile morality with this law? Thus: Social progress exists which tends to suspend the cosmic process, and to replace it by another — an ethical one, the object of which is no longer the survival of the "fittest," but of the "best" in the ethical sense.

Whence this ethical process came Mr. Huxley does not explain, but in Note 19 he says that the basis of this process consists in the fact that men, as well as animals, prefer, on the one hand, to live in a society, and therefore smother within themselves such propensities as are pernicious to societies, and, on the other hand, the members of societies crush by force such actions as are prejudicial to the welfare of the society. Mr. Huxley thinks that this process, which compels men to control their passions for the preservation of that association to which they belong, and the fear of punishment should they break the rules of that association, compose that very ethical law the existence of which it behooves him to prove.

It evidently appears to Mr. Huxley, in the innocence of his mind, that in English society of our time, with its Irish destitution, its insane luxury of the rich, its trade in opium and spirits, its executions, its sanguinary wars, its extermination of entire nations for the sake of commerce and policy, its secret vice and hypocrisy — it appears to him that a man who does not overstep police regulations is a moral man, and that such a man is guided by an ethical process. Mr. Huxley seems to forget that those personal qualities which may be needful to prevent the destruction of that society in which its member lives, may be of service to the

[1] Delivered in 1893 before the University of Oxford as the second of the annual courses of lectures founded by the late G. J. Romanes, one condition being that there should be no discussion of religion or politics. The article with Prolegomena is the first in the volume to which it gives its name — "Evolution and Ethics" — published by Macmillan in 1894. — Ed.

society itself: and that the personal qualities of the members of a band of brigands are also useful to the band; as, also, in our society, we find a use for hangmen, jailers, judges, soldiers, false-pastors, etc., but that the qualities of these men have nothing in common with morality.

Morality is an affair of constant development and growth, and hence the preservation of the instituted orders of a certain society, by means of the rope and scaffold, to which as instruments of morality Mr. Huxley alludes, will be not only not the confirmation, but the infraction of morality. And on the contrary, every infringement of existing canons, such as was the violation by Christ and His disciples of the ordinances of a Roman province, such as would be the defiance of existing regulations by a man who refuses to take part in judgments at law, military service, and payment of taxes to be used for military preparations, will be not only not contrary to morality, but the indispensable condition of its manifestation. Every cannibal who ceases to eat his own kind acts in the same manner and transgresses the ordinances of his society. Hence, though actions which infringe the regulations of society may be immoral, without doubt, also, every truly moral action which advances the cause of morality is always achieved by transgressing some ordinance of society.

And, therefore, if there has ever appeared in a society a law which demands the sacrifice of personal advantage to preserve the unity of the whole social fabric, that law is not an ethical statute, but for the most part, on the contrary (being opposed to all ethics), is that same law of struggle for existence in a latent and concealed form. It is the same struggle, but transferred from units to their agglomerations. It is not the cessation of strife, but the swinging backward of the arm to hit the harder.

If the law of the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest is the eternal law of all life (and one must perforce regard it as such with reference to man considered as an animal), then such misty arguments as to

social progress — and an ethical law supposed to proceed from it, like a *deus ex machina*, coming none knows whence, to assist us in our need — cannot break that law down.

If social progress, as Mr. Huxley assures us, collects men into groups, then the same struggle and the same survival will exist between families, races, and states, and this struggle will be, not only not more moral, but more cruel and immoral than that between individuals, as, indeed, we find it in reality.

Even if we admit the impossible — that all humanity, solely by social progress, will in a thousand years achieve a single unity and will constitute one state and nation, even then, not to mention that the struggle suppressed between states and nations will be altered to one between humanity and the animal world, and that that struggle will always remain a struggle, — that is, an activity absolutely excluding the possibility of Christian morality as professed by us, — not to speak of this, even then the struggle between the individuals which compose this unity, and between the associations of families, races, nationalities will not in the least be diminished, but will continue the same, only in another form, as we may observe in all associations of men in families, races, and states. Those of one family quarrel and fight among themselves, just as strangers do — and often even more cruelly. So also in a state, the same struggle continues between those within it, as between them and those without, only in other forms. In one case men kill one another with arrows and knives, in another by starvation. And if the feeblest are sometimes preserved in the family or state, it is in no wise thanks to the state association, but because self-abnegation and tenderness exist among people joined in families and states.

If, of two orphan children, only the fittest survives, whereas both might live with the help of a good mother, this fact will not be in consequence of family unification, but because a certain mother is gifted with tenderness and self-denial. And neither of these gifts can proceed from social progress.

To assert that social progress produces morality is equivalent to saying that the erection of stoves produces heat. Heat proceeds from the sun; and stoves produce heat only when fuel — the work of the sun — is kindled in them; so morality proceeds from religion, and social forms of life produce morality only when into these forms are put the results of religious influence on humanity — that is, morality. Stoves may be kindled, and so may impart heat, or may be left fireless and so remain cold.

So, too, social forms may include morality, and in that case morally influence society, or may not include morality, and thus remain without influence. Christian morality cannot be founded on the heathen or social conception of life, nor can it be deduced either from non-Christian philosophy or science — cannot only not be deduced, but cannot be reconciled with them. So has it always been understood by every serious, consistent philosophy and science.

"Do our propositions disagree with morality? Well, then, so much the worse for morality," said such a philosophy and science with perfect correctness, and continued their investigations.

Ethical treatises, not founded on religion, and even lay catechisms, are written and used, and men may believe that humanity is guided by them; but it only seems to be so, because people in reality are guided, not by these treatises and catechisms, but by the religion which they have always had and have; whereas the treatises and catechisms are only counterfeits, bearing the seal of religion.

Ordinances of lay morality not founded upon religious teaching are similar to the actions of a man who, being ignorant of music, should take the conductor's seat before the orchestra, and begin to wave his arms before the musicians who are performing. The music might continue a little while by its own momentum, and from the previous knowledge of the players; but it is evident that the mere waving of a stick by a man who is ignorant of music would be not only useless, but would inevitably confuse the musicians and in the end disorganize the

orchestra. The same disorder is beginning to take place in the minds of the men of our time, in consequence of the attempts of leading men to teach people morality, not founded on that loftiest religion which is in process of adoption, and is in part adopted by Christian humanity. It would be, indeed, desirable to have a moral teaching unmixed with superstition, but the fact is that moral teaching is only the result of a certain perceived relation of man to the universe, or to God. If the perception of such a relation is expressed in forms which seem to us superstitious, then, in order to prevent this, we should try to express this relation more clearly, reasonably, and accurately, and even to destroy the former perception of man's relationship which has become insufficient, and to put in its place one loftier, clearer, and more reasonable; but by no means to invent a so-called lay, irreligious morality, founded on sophisms or upon nothing at all.

The attempts to inculcate morality independent of religion are like the actions of children when, wishing to move a plant which pleases them, they tear off the root which does not please, and seems unnecessary to them, and plant it in the earth without the root. Without a religious foundation there can be no true, sincere morality, as without a root there can be no true plant.

Thus, in reply to your two questions, I say religion is the conception by man of his relationship to the infinite universe, or to its source. And morality is the ever-present guide of life proceeding only from this relationship.

1894.

TWO LETTERS ON HENRY GEORGE

I

IN reply to your letter[1] I send you the enclosed with special pleasure. I have been acquainted with Henry George since the appearance of his "Social Problems." I read that book, and was struck by the correctness of his main idea, and by the unique clearness and power of his argument, which is unlike anything in scientific literature, and especially by the Christian spirit which pervades the book, making it also stand alone in the literature of science. After reading it I turned to his previous work, "Progress and Poverty," and with a heightened appreciation of its author's activity. You ask my opinion of Henry George's work, and of his single tax system. My opinion is the following: —

Humanity advances continually toward the enlightenment of its consciousness,[2] and to the institution of modes of life corresponding to this consciousness, which is in process of enlightenment. Hence in every period of life and humanity there is, on the one hand, a progressive enlightenment of consciousness, and on the other a realization in life of what is enlightened by the consciousness. At the close of the last century and the beginning of this, a progressive enlightenment of con-

[1] Written in answer to a German, occupied in spreading the ideas and system of Henry George in his own country, who wrote to ask Tolstoi what views he held concerning such an activity.

[2] The Russian word *soznanye* signifies both "consciousness" and "conscience," and as in these paragraphs seems to vibrate between the two concepts. — Ed.

sciousness occurred in Christianized humanity with respect to the working-classes, who were previously in various phases of slavery; and a progressive realization of new forms of life — the abolition of slavery and the substitution of free hired labor.

At the present day a progressive enlightenment of human consciousness is taking place with reference to the use of land, and soon, it seems to me, a progressive realization in life of this consciousness must follow. And in this progressive enlightenment of consciousness with reference to the use of land, and in the realization of this consciousness, which constitutes one of the chief problems of our time, the fore-man, the leader of the movement, was and is Henry George. In this lies his immense and predominant importance. He has contributed by his excellent books both to the enlightenment of the consciousness of mankind with reference to this question, and to placing it on a practical footing.

But with the abolition of the revolting right of ownership in land, the same thing is being repeated which took place, as we can still remember, when slavery was abolished. The government and ruling classes, knowing that the advantages and authority of their position amongst men are bound up in the land question, while pretending that they are preoccupied with the welfare of the people, organizing working-men's banks, inspection of labor, income taxes, and even an eight hours' day, studiously ignore the land question, and even, with the aid of an obliging and easily corrupted science, assert that the expropriation of land is useless, harmful, impossible.

The same thing is happening now as in the days of the slave trade. Mankind, at the beginning of the present and at the end of the last century, had long felt that slavery was an awful, soul-nauseating anachronism; but sham religion and sham science proved that there was nothing wrong in it, that it was indispensable, or, at least, that its abolition would be premature. To-day something similar is taking place with reference to property in land. In the same way sham religion and

sham science are proving that there is nothing wrong in landed property, and no need to abolish it. One might think it would be palpable to every educated man of our time that the exclusive control of land by people who do not work upon it, and who prevent hundreds and thousands of distressed families making use of it, is an action every whit as wicked and base as the possession of slaves; yet we see aristocrats, supposed to be educated and refined, English, Austrian, Prussian, Russian, who profit by this base and cruel right, and who are not only not ashamed, but proud of it.

Religion blesses such possession, and the science of political economy proves that it must exist for the greatest welfare of mankind. It is Henry George's merit that he not only exploded all the sophism whereby religion and science justify landed property, and pressed the question to the furthest proof, which forced all who had not stopped their ears to acknowledge the unlawfulness of ownership in land, but also that he was the first to indicate a possible solution to the question. He was the first to give a simple, straightforward answer to the usual excuses made by the enemies of all progress, which affirm that the demands of progress are illusions, impracticable, inapplicable.

The method of Henry George destroys this excuse by so putting the question that to-morrow committees might be appointed to examine and deliberate on his scheme and its transformation into law. In Russia, for instance, the inquiry as to the means for the ransom of land, or its gratuitous confiscation for nationalization, might be begun to-morrow, and solved, with certain restrictions, as thirty-three years ago the question of liberating the peasants was solved. To humanity the indispensableness of this reform is demonstrated, and its feasibleness is proved (emendations, alterations in the single tax system may be required, but the fundamental idea is a possibility); and therefore humanity cannot but do that which reason demands. For this idea to become public opinion it is only necessary that

it should be spread and explained precisely as you are doing, in which work I sympathize with you with all my heart, and wish you success.

II [1]

The scheme of Henry George is as follows: The advantage and profit from the use of land is not everywhere the same; since the more fertile, convenient portions, adjoining populous districts, will always attract many who wish to possess them; and in proportion as these portions are better and more suitable they ought to be appraised more highly: the better, dearer; the worse, cheaper; the worst, cheapest of all.

So that the land which attracts but few should not be appraised at all, but left without payment to those who are willing to cultivate it by their own manual labor. According to such a valuation, good plowland in the government of Tula, for example, would be valued at about five or six rubles the desyatin;[2] market garden land near villages at ten rubles; the same, but watered by spring floods, fifteen rubles, and so on. In towns the valuation would be from one hundred to five hundred rubles the desyatin; and in Moscow and Petersburg, in go-ahead places, and about the harbors of navigable rivers, several thousands or tens of thousands of rubles the desyatin.

When all the land in the country has been thus appraised, Henry George proposes to pass a law declaring that all the land, from such a year and date, shall belong no longer to any separate individual, but to the whole country, to the whole nation; and that thereafter every one who possesses land must pay to the State, that is, to the whole nation, the rent at which it has been appraised.

This payment must be expended on all the public needs of the State, so that it will take the place of every

[1] Written to a Russian peasant living in Siberia.
[2] A desyatin is 2.7 acres.

kind of monetary imposition, both interior and exterior — the custom-house.

According to this scheme it would follow that a landowner, who was at present in possession of two thousand desyatins, would continue to own them, but would have to pay for them into the treasury, here in Tula, between twelve and fifteen thousand rubles a year, because hereabouts the best land for agricultural and building purposes would be included; and as no large landowner would be able to bear the strain of such a payment, he would be obliged to give up the land. Whereas our Tula peasant would have to pay about two rubles less for each desyatin of the same ground than he does at present, would always have available land around him which he could hire for five or six rubles, and in addition, would not only have no other taxes to pay, but would get untaxed all Russian and foreign articles which he needs. In towns the owners of houses and manufactories can continue to possess their property, but will have to pay into the common treasury for the land they occupy, according to its valuation.

The advantage of such a system will be: —

(1) That no one will be unable to obtain land for use.

(2) That there will cease to be idle men possessing land, and forcing others to work for them, in return for the use of the land.

(3) That the land will be in the hands of those who work it, and not of those who do not.

(4) That the people, being able to work on the land, will cease to enslave themselves as laborers in factories, and manufactories, and as servants in towns; and will be scattered about the country.

(5) That there will be no longer any overseers and tax-collectors in factories, manufactories, stores, and custom-houses, but only collectors of payment for the land, which it is impossible to steal, and from which taxes may be most easily collected.

(6 and chiefly) That those who do not labor will be freed from the sin of profiting by the labors of others (in doing which they are often not to blame, being from

childhood educated in idleness, and not knowing how to work), and from the still greater sin of every kind of falsehood and excuse to shift the blame from themselves; and that those who do labor will be delivered from the temptation and sin of envy, condemnation of others, and exasperation against those who do not work; and thus one of the causes of dissension between man and man will disappear.

MANUAL LABOR AND INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY

FROM A PRIVATE LETTER[1]

YOU ask me why manual labor presents itself to us as one of the unavoidable conditions of true happiness. Is it necessary voluntarily to deprive ourselves of intellectual activity in the domain of science and art, which seems to us incompatible with manual labor?

I have never regarded manual labor as a special principle, but as a very simple and natural application of moral bases — an application which before all is presented to every sincere man.

In our perverted society — in the society called civilized — we need, above all things, to speak of manual labor, because the chief fault of our society has been, and up to the present time still is, the striving to rid ourselves of manual labor, and without mutual concessions to profit by the labor of the poor, uneducated, and indigent classes who are in a state of slavery akin to that which obtained in antiquity.

The first indication of sincerity on the part of the people of our class, professing Christian, philosophical or humanitarian principles, is the endeavor, as far as possible, to avoid this injustice. The simplest and most available means of attaining this is manual labor, which begins with each man attending to his own wants.

I never believe in the sincerity of the philosophical and moral principles of a man who compels a servant girl to wait on him.[2]

[1] Entitled, "Letter to a Frenchman" in the Geneva edition which contains several paragraphs not in the Moscow edition.

[2] Not in Moscow edition.

The simplest and shortest rule of morality consists in a man compelling as little service as possible from others, and serving other men as much as possible, — in demanding as little as possible from others, and in giving others as much as possible. This rule, imparting to our existence a reasonable meaning and blessing, as its consequence resolves simultaneously all difficulties equally with that which presents itself to you. This rule points out the place which ought to be occupied by intellectual activity, by science and art. Following this rule I am happy and satisfied only when I am indubitably convinced that my activity is advantageous to others.

The satisfaction of those for whom I am working is already a superfluity, an excess of happiness, on which I do not reckon, and which can have no influence on my actions.

My firm belief that what I am doing is advantageous and not harmful, but is good for others — this conviction is the chief condition of my happiness. And precisely this causes a sincere and moral man involuntarily to prefer manual labor to scientific or artistic work.

For the advantage of my literary labors the work of compositors is required; for the completion of my symphony I need the coöperation of musicians; for the production of my experiments I require the help of those who make apparatus and instruments for our laboratories; for the pictures which I paint, I depend on men who prepare colors and canvas; and meantime the works which I am producing may be useful for men, or — as happens in the majority of cases — may be perfectly useless and even injurious.

How can I occupy myself with actions, the use of which is entirely dubious, and for the accomplishment of which I must compel others to labor — when in front of me, around me, is an infinite number of things all of which are indubitably useful for others, and for the production of which I need depend on no one? For example, to carry a burden for one for whom it is too heavy, to plow a field for a sick farmer, to bind up a wound, and the like, not to speak of the thousands of things sur-

rounding us, for the production of which extraneous help is not needed and which give immediate satisfaction to those for whom you produce them, and besides these there are a host of other actions: for example, to plant a tree, to raise a calf, to clean out a well — and all these things are unquestionably useful, and a sincere man cannot help preferring them to actions which require the labor of others, and are at the same time of doubtful utility.

The calling of a prophet, of a teacher, is elevated and noble. But we know the good of priests who consider themselves the only teachers, because they have the opportunity of forcing themselves to be considered such.[1] Yet not the teacher that receives the education and training of a teacher, but the one that has an inner conviction of what he is, ought to be and can be anything else. This condition is rarely met with, and can be proved only by the sacrifices which the man makes for his calling.

The same is true both for true science and true art. The violinist Lulli, at the peril of his life, escaped from the kitchen to the attic in order to play on his violin, and by this sacrifice he proved the truth of his calling. But for a conservatory teacher, a student, whose only obligation is to accomplish the task set before them, it is impossible to prove the truth of their calling. They only take advantage of the position which presents itself to them as favorable.

Manual labor is a duty and happiness for all; the activity of the mind and of the imagination is an exclusive activity; it is a duty and pleasure only for those that are called to it. The calling may be recognized and shown only by the sacrifice which the savant or the artist makes of his ease and well-being in order to devote himself to his calling. A man who continues to fulfil his obligation, — the subjugation of his life to the work of his hands, — and, notwithstanding this, takes hours from his rest and his sleep in order to produce something in the domain of intellect and imagination, proves thereby that he is called to it, and produces in

[1] This sentence not in Moscow edition, nor the word *prorok* (prophet).

his own domain something useful to men. He who holds aloof from the universal moral obligation, and, under the pretext of a special bent to science or art, arranges for himself the life of a sluggard — such a man merely produces a false science and a false art.

The fruits of true science and true art are the fruits of sacrifice, but are not the fruits of certain material advantages.

But what then will become of science and art?

How often have I heard this question from men not at all interested in science or in art, and not having the slightest comprehension of what science and art are. It would seem that nearer than anything else to the heart of these men was the good of humanity, which, according to their conviction, could not be attained in any other way except by the development of what they call science and art.

But what a strange thing to defend the usefulness of the useful! Can there be people so foolish as to deny the usefulness of that which is useful? And furthermore, can there be people so foolish as to consider it their duty to defend the usefulness of the useful?

There are workingmen who are artisans; there are workingmen-farmers. No one ever made up his mind to deny their usefulness. And never will a workman need to prove the usefulness of his labor. He produces, and what he produces is essential and is good for others. They make use of it, and no one doubts its usefulness, and what is more, no one proves it. The laborers in art and science are in the same position. Why are people found compelling themselves to prove their usefulness?

The reason is that true laborers in science and art do not trouble themselves about their rights; they give the productions of their labors. These productions are useful, and they do not need rights and the ratification of them.

But the great majority of those that consider themselves scientists and artists know very well that what they produce is not worth what they expend. And they employ all possible means to prove that their activity is

essential for the well-being of humanity. True sciences and arts have always existed and always will exist, like all other branches of human activity, and it is impossible and idle to deny or defend them.

The false position which is occupied in our society by science and art merely proves that men calling themselves civilized, with scientists and artists at their head, constitute a caste with all the vices characteristic of every caste. They bring down from its height and diminish the principle in the name of which the caste is composed. They lay a heavy burden on the people, and, moreover, shut off the light, idly striving to prove that they are disseminating it. And what is worse than all, their acts always contradict the principles which they preach.

Not counting those that uphold an insufficient principle — science for science's sake, art for art's sake — they are all required to prove that science and art are essential, because they subserve the weal of mankind.

But in what consists this weal? By what signs can the weal be separated from the evil? The partizans of science and art dodge this question. They even suppose that a definition of well-being — *blago* — is impossible, and is outside of science and outside of art. Well-being in general, they say, is goodness, is beauty, but cannot be defined.

But they lie.

In all times humanity has only accomplished in its onward march that which has determined the good and the beautiful. Goodness and beauty were determined a thousand years ago. But this definition was insufficient for them, for the priests, — it displayed their emptiness and the perniciousness of what they called science and art opposed to goodness and beauty. The Brahmin, the Buddhist, and Chinese sages, the Hebrews, Egyptians, the Greek stoics defined good in the same accurate way. Everything that promotes unity among men is goodness and beauty; everything that separates them is evil and ugly. All men know this definition — it is imprinted in our hearts.

Goodness and beauty for humanity is what unites men. Thus if the partizans of science and art actually have in view the good of humanity, they ought to advance only such sciences and such arts as lead to these ends; and if this were so, there would not be so many sciences, the aim of which is the advantage only of a few societies and the injury of others. If good were actually the aim of arts and sciences, never would the investigations of the positive sciences, since they often have no relation to the true advantage of mankind, attain such an inexplicable importance. The same may be said of the productions of art, which are suitable only as an excitement for depraved old men, and the pastime of idle people.

Human wisdom is not wholly included in the number of the sciences. There is an infinite quantity of things which we cannot know. Wisdom does not consist in knowing as much as possible. Human wisdom consists in a knowledge of the order in which it is profitable to know things; wisdom consists in the knowledge of what is most important, and what is least important to know. Of all the sciences needful for men, the chief one is the knowledge of how to live, doing as little harm as possible; and of all arts, the most important is that which teaches how to avoid evil, and how to produce good with the least violence.

And now it has come about that among all the arts and sciences which claim to advance the good of humanity, those first in importance not only do not exist in reality, but are even excluded from the list of arts and sciences.

What in our society is called science and art, is only a monstrous soap-bubble, a superstition into which we usually fall as soon as we free ourselves from other superstitions.[1] In order clearly to see the route by which we must go, we must turn back to the very beginning, we must take off the cowl which keeps our heads warm but prevents us from looking up. The temptation is great.

[1] From "The Superstitions of the Church." Geneva edition.

If we are not placed in this position by birth, we strive, by cleverness or hard work, to mount the highest rounds of the social ladder to the privileged social position of the priests of civilization, and we need much candor and much love of truth and goodness to question the principles that condition such a lofty position.

But for a serious man who tries to settle the question of life there is no choice: in order for him to begin to see clearly he must free himself from superstition, even though it may be to his advantage.[1]

This condition is a *sine qua non.*

It is unprofitable to quarrel with a man as to what he takes for his faith. If the field of thought is not perfectly free, one can indulge in long disputes, long criticisms, and never move one iota toward the knowledge of truth. Every reasonable opinion meets with shipwreck on preëstablished positions.

There is a religious faith and there is a faith in the progress of civilization. They are absolutely alike. The Catholic says to himself: I can think except in the domain of the Holy Scriptures and Tradition which govern the truth in its fulness and unchangeability. The believer in civilization says: My opinion stops before the two bases of civilization — science and art. Our science, he says, is the association of the true knowledge of man; if at the present time it does not command the full truth, in time to come it will do so. Our art, together with classic art, is the only true art.

Religious superstitions say: Outside of man exists the *Ding an sich* — the absolute — as the Germans say — that is the Church.

Men of our society say: Outside of man civilization exists in itself.

It is easy for us to see the lack of logic in religious superstitions because we do not share them. But the religious believer, the Catholic, for example, is fully persuaded that there is no other truth except his. And it

[1] These twenty-three words and the next paragraph but one are not in the Moscow edition.

seems to him that his fountain of truth is proved by reason.[1]

And when we are misled by the false belief in our civilization, it is almost impossible for us to see the illogicalness of our opinions, which are all directed to proving that in all times ours is the only time, that among all nations only so many millions of people inhabiting the continent called Europe command genuine civilization composed of genuine science and genuine art.

In order to comprehend the true significance of life, simple as it is, there is no need of positive philosophy or of deep learning, it is only necessary to have one negative quality: it is necessary *not* to have prejudices. It is necessary to enter into the state of a child or of a Descartes. It is necessary to say to oneself: I know nothing and I wish nothing more than merely to comprehend the true significance of life — that life which I must live.

And the answer was vouchsafed in the earliest times, and this answer is clear and simple.

My innermost feeling tells me that I wish well-being, happiness, for myself, for myself alone. Reason says to me: All men, all creatures, wish the same thing. All beings which, like me, seek their own personal happiness, evidently tend to crush me. And so I cannot attain that happiness which my life is striving toward. This striving toward happiness is my life, but reason shows me that this striving is idle, and that, therefore, I cannot live.

Simple thought shows me that in this terrestrial order of things, while all beings are striving only for their own personal happiness, I, a being who am also striving to the same end, cannot attain this well-being. And I cannot live. But notwithstanding this clear opinion, we do live, and we seek happiness and well-being.

We say to ourselves: I could attain well-being, could be happy, only in the chance that all other beings should love me more than they love themselves.

[1] The three paragraphs preceding are not in the Moscow edition.

This is impossible. But nevertheless we all live, and all our activity, all our strivings for wealth, for family, for fame, for power, are nothing more or less than attempts to make others love us more than they love themselves.

Wealth, fame, power, give us something like that condition of things, and we are almost satisfied; for a time we forget that this is only an illusion and not the reality.

All beings love themselves more than they love us, and happiness is impossible. There are men — and the number of them is increasing every day — who cannot solve this difficulty, and who kill themselves, declaring that life is an empty and stupid jest. But in the meantime the solution of the riddle is more than simple, and offers itself. I can be happy only in a worldly order where all beings should love others more than themselves. The whole world would be happy if all beings loved, not themselves, but their fellows.

I am a being, a man, and reason gives me the law of universal well-being. And I ought to follow this law of my reason, I ought to love others more than myself.

And a man has only to come to this conclusion, for life suddenly to present itself to him from an entirely different standpoint from what it did before.

Beings annihilate one another, but at the same time beings love and assist one another. Life is subjected, not to the passion of destructiveness, but to the feeling of mutuality, which, in the language of our hearts, is called love.

However much I may see development in the life of the world, I see in it only the manifestation of this principle of mutual help. All history is nothing else than an ever clearer and clearer display of this unique principle of the common agreement of all beings.

This opinion is supported both by historical experiment and by personal experiment. But beside the opinion, man finds a most convincing proof of the justice of this opinion in his inner immediate consciousness. The greatest good which man knows, the consciousness of fullest freedom and happiness, is the condition of self-

denial and love. Reason opens up to man the only possible path to happiness, and feeling directs man along this path.

* * * * * * *

If the thoughts which I have tried to present before you seem to you obscure, do not judge them too severely. I hope that sometime you will read their development in a clearer and simpler form. I only wanted to give you an idea of my views of life.

1889.

LETTER TO N. N.

My dear N. N.

I address you as "dear," not because this is a customary form, but because since I received your first letter, and especially since your second one came, I feel that we are very closely united, and I love you dearly. In the feeling which I experience, there is much that is egotistical. You certainly do not think so, but you cannot imagine to what degree I am alone, to what a degree the actual "I" is scorned by all surrounding me. I know that he that endures to the end will be saved: I know that only in trifles is the right given to a man to take advantage of the fruit of his labor, or even to look on this fruit, but that in the matter of divine truth which is eternal it cannot be given to a man to see the fruit of his work, especially in the brief period of his short life: I know all this, and yet I am often despondent, and therefore my meeting with you and the hope, almost the certainty, of finding in you a man who is sincerely going with me in one way, and to one and the same good, is to me very cheering.

Now, then, I will reply in a systematic way. Your letters to Aksakof, especially the last one, pleased me. Your arguments are irresistible, but for him do not exist. Everything he says I knew long ago. This is all repeated in life, in literature, in conversations; it is always the same thing and the same thing. And this is precisely what it is: You say, "I see that this is the truth and this other is false, for this reason and for that, and that this is good and that is evil, for this reason and for that."

Aksakof and those like him see that this is the truth; even before you have told them they know the truth. But

they live in falsehood, but for a man, for any one with a heart which loves right, and hates wrong, and by reason has one purpose of distinguishing truth from falsehood, for such a man to be able to live in falsehood and evil, and to serve them, he must beforehand have shut his eyes to the truth, and continue to do the wrong which he loves. But all have the same kind of blinders: the historical perspective, the objective glance, worry about others, and the setting aside of the question of one's relation to goodness and truth.

This Aksakof is doing, this Soloviof is doing, this all the theologians are doing, this all the governmental people, the political economists, are doing, this is what all who live contrary to truth and goodness and who must justify themselves in their own hearts are doing.

"*And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. For every one that practises evil hates the light, and comes not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that practises the truth comes to the light, that his works may be made manifest that have been wrought in God.*"[1]

It is impossible to express this more clearly than it is said here. From this I draw this conclusion, that it is not necessary to fling pearls to these people, but that one must elaborate a certain relation to them in which our forces will not be wasted. Argument with them is not only an idle business, but injurious to our object. They provoke us by argument to something superfluous, incorrect; and, forgetting all that is most important in what you have said, they stick to this one thing. The relation to them which I try to cultivate in myself, and inculcate in others, is the same as my relation to a depraved drunken youth who should try to contaminate my sixteen-year-old son. I am sorry for this young libertine, but I do not try to reform him, because I know it is impossible. If I chide him, he will only turn me into ridicule before my son. I do not even forcibly remove my son from him, because my son will surely meet him

[1] John iii. 19–21.

or his like again, if not to-day, then to-morrow. I do not even try to make my son see his wickedness. My son himself must discover it. But I strive to fill my son's soul with such instruction that the young libertine's temptations do not appeal to him; otherwise our resources, which are so small, are wasted in throwing away the pearls, and they go on trampling upon and rending, not you and me, N. N., but what is worse, extinguishing the little light that is dawning amid the darkness.

And here, by this digression, I come directly to the second and most important point of your letter. But how to open the eyes of men, to save them from the blandishments of the libertines, when evidence prevents this? *How bring about the accomplishment of evangelical teaching? Ought I not to defend people if they ask me for help, even if it came about that they must be freed by violence, if before my eyes people are beaten and killed?* To defend and free people by violence is not necessary, because this is impossible, and because to try to do good by violence, that is by wrong, is stupid.

My dear, please, for the sake of God's truth which you serve, do not make undue haste, do not lose patience, do not invent proofs of the justice of your opinion before you have thought over, not what I write you, but the Gospels, and not the Gospels as the word of Christ or God and the like, but the Gospels as the clearest, simplest, and most universally comprehensible and practical teaching of how each one of us and all men must live.

If before my eyes a mother is cutting her child to pieces, what must I do? Understand that the question is what ought I to do, that is, what is right and reasonable, and not what will be my first impulse in regard to it. My first impulse at a private insult is to avenge it; but the question comes: Is this reasonable? And exactly the same question arises whether it is reasonable to employ violence upon the mother who is cutting up her child. If the mother is murdering her child, what is it that is painful to me, and I consider wrong? The fact that the child is suffering, or the fact that

the mother is experiencing, not the joy of love, but the torments of hate? And I think that the evil is in both. One man cannot do anything evil. Evil is the discord of men, and therefore, if I wish to act, I can only do so with the aim of putting an end to the discord, and bringing about concord between the mother and child.

How must I act? Constrain the mother? I do not destroy her discord — the sin — with her child, but I only induce a new sin, a discord between her and myself. What is possible? One thing — to put myself in the child's place. This will not be unreasonable.

What Dostoyevsky wrote, and is very repugnant to me, is said to me by ascetic monks and metropolitans, to wit, that it is possible to wage wars, that this is self-defense — to offer your life for your brethren; and I have always replied, — to defend them by your own breast, offering yourself, is right, but to shoot people with guns is not self-defense, but murder. Investigate the teaching of the Gospels, and you will see that the third brief commandment,[1] not to resist evil, that is, not to return evil for evil, is, I will not say the chief, but is the keystone of the whole teaching, and the very thing which all pseudo-Christian commentaries have strenuously avoided and still avoid, and is the very position, the denial of which serves as the foundation of all that you so righteously hate.

I am not speaking of the council of Nicæa, which accomplished so much evil, and was based on this very same understanding of Christ's teaching, that is, on violence in the name of right and of Christ; in the apostolic times, in Paul, in the Acts, this idea of violence in the name of right is begotten, and destroys the meaning of the doctrine.

How often it has happened ludicrously to me in my conversations with popes and revolutionists, who regarded the evangelical teaching as a weapon for the attainment of external objects, that men of these two classes standing

[1] *You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, Resist not evil; but whoever smites you on the right cheek turn to him the other also.* — MATTHEW x. 38, 39.

at opposite poles, yet with unanimous heat, denied this special datum of Christ's teaching. For the first, it is impossible not to lose temper, to choke off dissidents, not to glorify the battle-field and capital punishments; for the second, it is impossible not to use violence in destroying the existing, ugly disorder which is called order. Evidently popes and authorities cannot even imagine the lives of men without violence. Exactly so it is with the revolutionists.

You know a tree by its fruits; a good tree cannot bring forth the fruits of violence. Christ's teaching cannot justify the one in choking, or the other in putting out of the way. And therefore both the one party and the other, distorting the doctrine, deprive themselves of that true force which is given by faith in the truth, in the whole truth, and not in a small fraction of it.

Those that lift the sword shall perish with the sword; this is not a prediction, but the assertion of a fact known to all. *The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!*

If thy light is darkness, if what you consider good is evil, the work also of thy life will be evil. It is impossible to serve God a little, the devil also a little. And the Gospel is not such a stupid book as the popes make it out for us. And each proposition is laid down in it, not idly, but so that it is organically connected with the whole teaching; thus the command as to non-resistance of evil runs through the whole of the Gospels, and without it the teaching of the Gospel, for me at least, wholly falls to the ground.

Moreover, it is expressed another time so clearly and directly that it is impossible to escape it; moreover, the whole account of Christ's life and actions is an application of this commandment; moreover in John, Caiaphas is represented as not comprehending this truth, and the consequence of not understanding this truth, under the pretext of the advantage of the people, ruin-

ing Christ's life, there directly points to the fact that resistance of evil is the most terrible and dangerous temptation, and that not only Christ's disciples yielded, but the Master himself almost did.

But, moreover, it now seems to me that even if Christ and his teaching had not existed, I myself should have discovered this truth, so simple and clear it seems to me now, and I am persuaded will seem equally clear to you. It is now so clear to me that, if I allow myself the slightest violence under the pretext of correcting the greatest evil, then another on the same pretext will allow himself to commit the smallest act of violence, and a third and a fourth and millions of trifling acts of violence will compose the awful evil which now reigns in the world and crushes us.

Now if you have heeded my request and have read calmly, refraining from the proofs of the confirmation of your opinion, but have followed my exposition, then I hope you have agreed that these are powerful proofs of the opinion which you oppose, and I hope still further that you will agree with me when you have read my short exposition [1] and my translation of the four Gospels which I send you.

As far as I can imagine, you are now in such a position; your reason tells you that I am right, but your heart revolts against such a position in regard to the non-resistance of evil. You say to yourself: —

"Whatever here is wrong, whatever mistakes in judgment are here, I will find it and I will prove it, because it cannot be that Christ's teaching, the teaching of love to your brother, should lead a man to sit down and fold his arms while looking on at the evil that is taking place in the world.

"It is all very well," you say, "for him, a worn-out old man, to indulge in idle chatter and try to persuade every one that evil must be endured. It is very well for him, he is fat and contented, he has everything he needs, and only a little while to live. All the warmth of his life has been used up, while I feel without argu-

[1] Vol. xvii. p. 281, "The Gospel in Brief."

ment that love for goodness and truth is not lodged in me, and hatred of evil and falsehood, without some purpose. I cannot help expressing it, I cannot live in its name, and every step of my life is a battle with evil. And I am bound to fight, and I shall fight it with such means as have already been opened up to me, or will present themselves in the future. Propagandism is necessary among the people, connection with the dissidents, action on the government, and the like."

The feeling that suggests this is a good feeling, and I love you for it; but this same feeling incited Peter to draw his knife and cut off the servant's ear. Imagine to yourself what would have happened if Jesus had not restrained them: a riot would have taken place, Jesus' followers would have fled, and then they would have captured Jerusalem. They would have cut men down and they would have been cut down. What would have been the Christian teaching? It would not have been, and there would have been nothing for us to boast about; we should have been worse than the Aksakofs and Soloviofs.

In order that you may more freely express my thought, I will tell you what I think, in what I consider Christ's teaching consists — a teaching not misty and metaphysical, but a clear and vital teaching.

All say that the significance of Christianity lies in loving God and your neighbor as yourself. But what is this God? What is it to love? How can one love anything incomprehensible — God? What is one's neighbor? What am I myself?

These words have for me this meaning: to love God means to love truth; to love one's neighbor as one's self means to acknowledge the unity of the essence of one's soul and life with every other human life — with eternal truth — God.

Thus it is for me.

But it is clear to me that these words, which really define nothing, may be understood otherwise, and that the majority cannot even understand them as I do. The principal thing is that these words neither for me

nor for any one else entail any obligation or define anything. What can be the love of a God whom every one understands in his own way, and whom others do not recognize at all, and what can be the love for a neighbor as for oneself, when I am filled with a self-love which never for an instant leaves me, and often with a constant hatred to others?

This is all so obscure and impracticable that it remains an empty phrase. My opinion is that this position is metaphysical, very important as such, but when this position is accepted as a rule of life, as a law, then it is simply stupid. And unfortunately it is frequently so understood. I say all this so as to explain that the significance of Christianity, as of every other religion, is not found in metaphysical principles, — metaphysical principles exist in all humanity: Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, have always been and will always be the same, — but in the application of them to life, in the vital production of that happiness of every man and of all humanity which is attained by the application of these principles to life, to explaining the possibility of the application of them and to the definition of the rules whereby it is attained.

Even in Deuteronomy it says: Love God and your neighbor as yourself; but the application of this principle, according to Deuteronomy, consisted in circumcision, the Sabbath, and the criminal law.

The significance of Christianity consists in proving the possibility and the blessedness of fulfilling the law of love. Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, very clearly defined how it was necessary and possible for one's own happiness and that of all men to fulfil this law. In the Sermon on the Mount — without which there would have been no teaching of Christ, what all agree in is that which Christ says, not to the wise, but to the illiterate, the clownish, — in this sermon, which is provided with an introduction in regard to the person who shall break one of the least of the commandments (Matthew v. 17–20), and with an exordium to the effect that it is not necessary to speak but to fulfil (Matthew

vii. 21–27), — in this sermon the whole thing is said, and five commands are given as to the way of fulfilling the teaching.

In the Sermon on the Mount, the simplest, easiest, most comprehensible rules are laid down for love to God and one's neighbor, and for living without recognizing and fulfilling these commands it is idle to speak of Christianity. And strange as it may seem to say this after eighteen hundred years, it was brought to me to expound these rules as something new. And only when I understood these rules did I understand the significance of Christ's teaching. These rules so wonderfully embrace the whole life of every man and of all humanity, that only let a man proceed to fulfil these rules on earth and we should have on earth the reign of righteousness!

And then analyze all of these rules separately, applying them to yourself, and you will see that this unimaginably blessed and enormous result will be derived from the fulfilment of these most simple and natural, and not only easy, but also pleasant rules.

Do you imagine that it would be necessary for anything to be added to these rules in order for the kingdom of righteousness to exist? Nothing is necessary.

Do you imagine that anything could be taken from these rules without the kingdom of righteousness being infringed? Impossible!

If I knew nothing of Christ's teaching except these five rules, I should be just as much a Christian as I am now: —

I. Be not angry.
II. Do not commit fornication.
III. Take no oaths.
IV. Judge not; and
V. Do not go to war.

For me this constitutes the essence of Christ's teaching. And this clear expression of Christ's teaching has been hidden from men, and consequently humanity has constantly wandered away from it in two opposite directions. Some, seeing in Christ's teaching the teaching

of saving their souls for the sake of an eternal life, coarsely presented to them, were estranged from the world, striving only to do what they could to perfect themselves in solitude; this would have been ridiculous if it had not been so pitiful. And terrible efforts were put forth by these people, and there have been many of them, on an impossible and stupid thing, — to do good to themselves in solitude, away from men.

Others, on the contrary, not believing in a future life, have lived — the best of them — only for others, but did not know and did not care to know what was necessary for themselves, or why they wanted to do good to others and what this good was.

It seems to me that the one is impossible without the other: a man cannot do good to himself, to his soul, without doing for others and with others, as religious ascetics, and the best of them, have done; and a man cannot do good to men if he does not know what is necessary for him, and why he is acting, as has been done and is done by social workers without any faith.

I like men of the first kind, but with all the strength of my soul I hate their doctrine; and I like very much men of the second kind, and I hate their doctrine. There is truth only in that teaching which demands activity — a life which satisfies the demands of the soul, and at the same time is a constant activity for the good of others. Such was Christ's teaching. It is at once far from the quietism of the monk and from the anxiety about the soul and from the ardor of the revolutionist — governmental, priestly activity is revolutionary — who wishes to load others with benefits, and yet at the same time does not know what the true indubitable blessing is.

The Christian's life is such that it is impossible to do good to men otherwise than by doing good to himself, to his reasonable soul, and not to do good to himself otherwise than by doing good to his brethren. The Christian life is at once far removed from quietism and from agitation. Young people even of your turn of thought are inclined to confuse the true Christian teaching with the

quietism of the superstitious, and it seems to them that to renounce the resistance of evil by violence is very easy and convenient, and that from this the Christian movement grows feeble and is deprived of force. This is not true. You understand that the Christian renounces violence, not because he does not love what you desire, not because he does not see that violence is the first impulse that seizes a man at the sight of evil, but because he sees that violence shuts him off from his goal, and does not bring him near it, that it is not reasonable, as it is not reasonable for a man desiring to reach the water of a fountain to strike with his cane the earth which separates him from the spring; and for the man abstaining from violence it is no easier — on the contrary; just as it is no easier to take a spade and dig, than it is to pound the ground with a stake.

It is easier for him only because he assuredly knows that by not opposing evil with violence, but by meeting it with goodness and truth, he is doing what he can to fulfil the will of the Father, according to Christ's expression. It is impossible to quench fire with fire, to dry water with water, by evil to annihilate evil. This has been tried, tried since the world began, and now we are brought to that condition in which we now live. It would seem to be time to put aside the old way and undertake a new one, especially as it is more reasonable. If there is any advance, then it is only due to those that repay good for evil. Oh, if only one-millionth of those efforts which are employed by men to overcome evil by violence were employed in enduring evil, not taking part in it, and shining by the light that is given to every man!

Though simple from the customary point of view — nothing has been attained by this; then why not try the other, the more that it is so clear, manifest, and joyous? Here is a particular example; let us remember Russia during the last twenty years. How much genuine desire for righteousness, how much readiness for sacrifices, has been wasted by our intelligent classes — by establishing right, in doing good to men? And

what has been done? Nothing, worse than nothing. There has been a terrible waste of spiritual energies! They have broken the stake and they have beaten down the earth worse than before, which does not save the spade. Instead of these terrible sacrifices which are endured by the young, instead of the gunshots, explosions, printing-offices, what if these people should believe in Christ's teaching, that is, should come to the conclusion that the Christian life is the only reasonable life, that if instead of this terrible expenditure of force, one, two, a dozen, a hundred men, when called to military service, should say: "We cannot serve murderers, because we believe in Christ's teaching, which we preach. This is forbidden by His law."

They would say the same thing in relation to taking the oath, they would say the same thing in relation to courts, they would say the same thing and put it into practice in regard to the violence which supports private property; what would be the outcome of this I do not know, but I know that it would help the matter along, and that this is one way of fruitful activity — not to act contrary to Christ's teaching, and boldly and openly to confirm it — and not merely for the attainment of external aims, but for one's inner satisfaction, which consists in not doing evil to others while one is not yet strong enough to do them good.

This is my answer to your questions as to what is necessary to attain. It is necessary to attain this — the fulfilment of Christ's laws, and making plain to men the light and pleasure of fulfilling them.

All this, however, is better said in Matthew v. 13–16. I anticipate one further objection. You will say: "It is not clear how to fulfil these rules and to what they will lead us. How according to these rules to act toward private property, toward the authorities, toward international relations?"

Do not imagine that in Christ there was any lack of clearness. All is clear as day. The relation toward the authorities is told in the story of the penny. Money — private property — is not a Christian matter. It comes

from the authorities; give it back to the authorities. But your free soul is from the God of truth, and therefore give not your actions, your freedom of reason, to any one, except to God. They may kill you, but they cannot compel you to kill and to do an unchristian act.

As to private property, there is no private property according to the Gospels, and woe to those that have it; that is to say, it is bad for them, and so in whatever position a Christian finds himself, he cannot do anything in relation to the private property of any one else than not take part in the violence perpetrated in the name of private property; and he must assure others that private property is a myth, there is no private property, but there is a certain customary use of force in relation to the advantage of things which men call private property, and which is bad. For the man who shall give away his cloak when they want to deprive him of his shirt there can be no talk of private property.

Neither can there be any question of international relations. All men are brothers — of the same sort. And if a Zulu should come to murder my children, the only thing I can do is to try to persuade the Zulu that this is not to his advantage and not good — to persuade him, submitting to him by violence, the more so as there is no certainty in fighting with the Zulu. Either he gets the better of me, and, still more, murders my children, or I get the advantage, and my children the next day will be taken down with some illness, and suffer more, and die of it. There is no certainty, because if I submit I probably do better, while if I enter into a contest with him, it is a question whether I do any better.

This, then, is my answer: the very best thing that we can do is to fulfil all of Christ's teaching. But in order to fulfil it we must be convinced that it is true, both for all humanity and for each one of us. Have you this faith?

I think it best to print your article, though with some abbreviation. There are still two objections or questions which I raise; you will make them to me. The first is: What if, by submitting, as I say, to the Zulu and to the

policeman, and by giving up to the evil man all that he wishes to take from me, if by not taking part in governmental institutions of courts, educational institutions, universities, by not recognizing private property, you fall to the lowest degree of the social scale, you are trodden down and abused, you become a tramp — a beggar, and the light which is in you is wasted, no one sees it; and therefore is it not better to keep one's self at a certain degree of independence of need, and the possibility of refinement and intercourse with the great majority of the people? It really seems so. And it seems so because so dear to us are the amenities of life, our refinement, and all those so-called pleasures which it provides us, and we act against our conscience saying so. It is unjust because on whatever low plane he may stand he will always be with men, and therefore in a condition to do them good. But whether the professors of a university are better, whether the inmates of a cheap lodging-house are more important, for the Christian profession, is a question which no one can decide. My own feeling and Christ's example plead for the indigent; only the indigent can preach, that is, teach the reasonable life.

I may argue beautifully and be sincere, but no one will ever have faith in me as long as it is seen that I am living in a palace and with my family wasting every day the cost of a whole year's food for a poor family. But as regards our so-called culture, surely it would seem to be time to cease speaking of it as of a blessing. In spoiling a man, it spoils altogether ninety-nine out of a hundred, but it can never add anything to a man.

You probably know about Siutayef. Here we have an unlettered muzhik, but his influence on men, on our intelligence, is greater and more important than all the Russian savants and writers, including all the Pushkins and Byelinskys, from Tretyakovsky down to our time.[1] So in losing you lose nothing. And if any one leaves

[1] Aleksandr Sergeyevitch Pushkin, Russia's greatest lyric poet, born June 7, 1799, died Feb. 8, 1837; Vissarion Grigoryevitch Byelinsky, a famous Russian critic, born 1810, died 1848; Vasili Kirillovitch Tretyakovsky, translator, poetaster, scientist, born 1703, died 1769.

father and mother and brethren and wife and children, he will find a hundred times more here in this world, and houses and fathers and the eternal life besides. "*Many that are first shall be last.*" [1]

Now the second question, directly, involuntarily proceeding from the first: "Now here are you, Lyof Nikolayevitch, preaching and preaching, but how do you fulfil what you preach?"

This question is most natural, and I am all the time asked it, and they always close my mouth triumphantly.

You preach, but how do you live?

And I reply that I do not preach and I cannot preach, though I passionately desire to. I can preach by deed, but my deeds are vile. What I say is not preaching, but is only a refutation of a false conception of the Christian doctrine, and an explanation of its actual significance. Its significance is not the reconstruction of society, in its name, by violent means; its significance is in finding the meaning of life in this world. The fulfilment of the five commandments gives this meaning. If you wish to be a Christian, then you must fulfil these commandments, but if you do not wish to fulfil them, then do not prate about Christianity outside of the fulfilment of these commandments.

But, they say to me, if you find that outside of the fulfilment of the Christian teaching there is no reasonable life, and you love this reasonable life, why do you not fulfil the commandments?

I reply that I am to blame, and vile, and worthy of scorn because I do not fulfil them, but in this respect not so much in the way of exculpation, as in explanation of my inconsistency, I say: "Look at my former life and look at my life now, and you will see that I am trying to fulfil them. I have not fulfilled one ten thousandth part, it is true, and I am to blame; but I have not fulfilled them, not because I have not wanted to, but because I could not. Teach me how to disentangle myself from the net of temptations in which I am caught; help me, and I will fulfil them; but even with-

[1] Matthew x. 29.

out help I wish and hope to fulfil them. Blame me! I myself do that, but blame me, and not the road by which I go, and which I point out to those that ask me where, in my opinion, the road is. If I know the road home, and go along it intoxicated, staggering from side to side, does that make it any the less the true way by which I go? If it is not the right way, show me another; if I go astray and stagger, help me, keep me on the real way, as I am ready to keep you; but do not beat me off, do not rejoice because I have lost my way, do not cry out in enthusiasm: "There he is! He says he is going home, but he is sprawling in the slough." No, do not rejoice in this, but help me, hold me!

For you see you are not devils of the slough, but likewise people going home. For I am alone, and I do not wish to fall into the slough. Help me! help me! my heart is bursting with despair, that we are all blundering; and when I am struggling with all my powers, you, every time we go astray, instead of feeling sorry for yourself and myself, cry with enthusiasm, "Lo, here we all are in the slough!"

This, then, is my relation to the teaching and its fulfilment. With all my might I am striving to fulfil it, and at every failure I not only confess it, but I beg for help so as to be in a condition to fulfil it, and I meet joyously every one who is seeking the way, even as I am, and heed him.

If you read what I am sending, the substance of this letter will be clearer to you.

Write me. I am very glad to correspond with you, and I shall await your reply with impatience.

1883.

INDUSTRY; OR, THE FARMER'S TRIUMPH

"*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread, till thou returnest unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken.*" — GENESIS iii. 19.

SUCH is the title and such the epigraph to the work of Timofeï Mikhaïlovitch Bondaref. This work I read in manuscript.

Timofeï Mikhaïlovitch Bondaref's work seems to me very notable, as well for the force and clearness and beauty of the style in which it is written, as for the sincerity of his conviction manifest in every line, and especially for the importance, truth, and depth of the fundamental thought.

The fundamental thought of this work is as follows: In all terrestrial affairs the thing of importance is, not to know what is particularly fine and necessary, but out of all fine and necessary things or actions to know what is of first importance, what of second, what of third, and so on.

If this is important in terrestrial affairs, much so is it important in the matter of faith, which determines a man's obligations.

Tatian, a teacher in the early days of the Church, declares that the unhappiness of men comes not so much from the fact that they do not know God, as from the fact that they acknowledge a false God, they consider as God that which is not God. The same thing may be said also concerning the obligations of men. The unhappiness and wrong-doing of men come not so much from the fact that they do not know what their obligations are, as from the fact that they acknowledge

false obligations, that they consider as obligatory what is not obligatory, and they do not consider as obligatory what is their chief duty.

Bondaref declares that the unhappiness and wrong-doing of men come from the fact that they consider as religious duties many idle and injurious regulations, but forget and hide from themselves and others their first, chief, unquestionable duty, expressed in the first chapter of the Holy Scriptures: "*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread.*"

For men who believe in the sanctity and infallibility of the divine word expressed in the Bible, this command given by God himself and never repudiated is a sufficient proof of its truth. For men who do not accept the Holy Scriptures and the truth of this position, if we regard it merely without prejudice as a simple unsupernatural expression of human wisdom, it seems to be the fulfilment of the conditions of human life, just as Bondaref makes it in his work.

An obstacle to such a fulfilment, unfortunately, is found in the fact that many of us are so wonted to a perverted and senseless interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, that the mere mention of the fact that a certain position coincides with the Holy Scriptures is a sufficient ground for many to look with distrust on that position.

"What meaning have the Holy Scriptures for me? We know that we may build any argument we please on them."

But this is not just; the Holy Scriptures are not to blame because men interpret them falsely, and a man who speaks the truth is not to blame because he speaks the same truth as is spoken in the Holy Scriptures.

We must not forget that if it is admitted that the writings called the Holy Scriptures are the productions of God but of men, then it must be explained why these popular writings and not others are accepted by men as the work of God himself. There must be some cause for this.

And this cause is clear. These writings are called divine by superstitious people because they are higher than all the knowledge of men, and also because these

writings, in spite of the fact that certain men have always denied them, have come down to us, and are still considered divine. These writings are called divine and have come down to us simply because a lofty wisdom is embodied in them. And such in many of their passages are the writings which we call the Bible.

And such especially is the forgotten text, neglected and incomprehensible in its actual sense — the text which Bondaref explains and makes the corner-stone of his work.

This text and the first events of life in Paradise are usually understood in the direct sense of the words, meaning that everything happened precisely as it is described; but meantime the sense of this whole passage is this also, that it presents in picturesque form the contradictory impulses which are found in human nature.

Man is afraid of death, and yet he must die; man, as long as he knows not good and evil, seems happier, but he irresistibly strives to attain knowledge. Man loves idleness, and the gratification of his desires without suffering, and at the same time only labor and suffering give life to him and his race.

This text is important, not so much because it was spoken by God Himself to Adam, but because it is true: it utters one of the most undoubted laws of human life. The law of gravitation is not true because it was enunciated by Newton, but because I know Newton and am grateful to him for having discovered for me an eternal law which explains for me a whole series of phenomena.

The same thing also with the law, "*In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread.*" This is a law which explains for me a whole series of phenomena. And having once recognized it I can no longer forget it, and I am grateful to him who discovered it for me. This law seems very simple, and has been long known, but it only seems so, and to see that it is the opposite all you have to do is to look around about you. Men not only do not acknowledge this law, but they acknowledge one precisely the opposite. Men, by their faith,

— all, from the Tsar to the beggar, are striving not to fulfil this law, but to avoid fulfilling it. The above mentioned work of Bondaref is consecrated to an explanation of the importance, of the unalterableness, of the law, and the inevitability of the misfortunes arising from a neglect of it. Bondaref calls this law primeval, and the chief of all laws.

He shows that sin — in other words, the mistakes, the false steps we make — results only from the neglect of this law. Of all the obligations imposed on man, Bondaref considers the first, chief, and invariable duty of every man to work with his hands for his daily bread, meaning by bread all the heavy "black work" which is necessary to save a man from death by cold and starvation — in other words, bread and drink and raiment and shelter and warmth.

Bondaref's fundamental idea is that this law, — the law that a man to eat must work, — which till now has been considered as necessary, must be regarded as a blessed law of life, an obligation for every one.

This law must be acknowledged as a religious law, like the observance of the Sabbath, circumcision among the Hebrews, like the observance of the sacraments and Lent among Church Christians, like fivefold prayer among the Mohammedans.

Bondaref says in one place that if only men will recognize labor for their daily bread as a religious duty, then no particular private occupations can prevent them from doing this work, just as no special occupations can prevent churchmen from participating in the inactivity of their festivals. More than eighty days are taken out for festivals, but according to Bondaref only forty days are required to earn a man's daily bread. Strange as it may seem at first that such a simple method, comprehensible to all, free from anything subtile or sophisticated, can serve as a salvation from the actual numberless evils of humanity; it is still stranger, when you come to think of it, how we, having had such a simple and clear method, long known to all men, have put it aside and sought relief from our ills in

various subtilities and philosophies. But if you consider this, you will see that it is so. Supposing a man should make a tub without a bottom, and should then devise all sorts of clever schemes to carry water in it! This is what all our methods for curing existent evils amount to!

In fact, whence arise the calamities of men, if you exclude from the number the calamities that men directly bring on one another by murders, capital punishments, taxes, brawls, and all sorts of cruelties in which they sin by not refraining from violence?

All the calamities of mankind, with the exceptions of those caused by direct violence, proceed from hunger, from all kinds of deprivation, from overwork, and at the same time from superfluity, from sloth, and from the vices growing out of them. Whatever may be the holiest duty of man, is there any more so than that of bringing about the destruction of this inequality, of these calamities, of lack in some and of superfluity in others? And how can a man coöperate in the destruction of these calamities otherwise than by taking part in the labor which overcomes need, and by refraining from the superfluities and the idleness which produce vices and temptations; in other words, that every one should labor for his daily bread, should provide himself with food by the work of his hands, as Bondaref says?

We have so involved ourselves, laying down so many laws, both religious and social and domestic, so many precepts, — as Isaiah says, precept on precept, here a precept, there a precept, — that we have entirely lost the meaning of what is good and what is bad.

A man conducts a mass, another collects an army or taxes for it, a third sits on the bench, a fourth studies books, a fifth practises medicine, a sixth teaches men; and under these pretexts, freeing themselves from manual labor, they shirk it on others, and forget that men are dying of overwork, toil, and starvation: and in order that some one may sing at mass, some one may be protected by an army, some one may sit in judgment, some one may practise medicine or teach, it is

necessary that first of all men may cease dying of starvation. We forget that there may be many duties, but that there is a first and a last, and that it is impossible to fulfil the last until the first is fulfilled, just as it is impossible to harrow before the plowing is done.

Here we are recalled to this first indubitable duty in the domain of practical activity by Bondaref's teaching. Bondaref shows that the fulfilment of this obligation does not interfere with any one, presents no difficulties, and at the same time saves people from the calamity of need and superfluity. The fulfilment of this duty especially annihilates the terrible division into two classes which hate each other, and by flattery palliate their mutual hatred. Manual labor, says Bondaref, equalizes all, and clips the wings of luxury and lust.

It is impossible to plow and dig wells in costly raiment and with clean hands and after feeding on delicate food. Occupation in one sacred labor common to all brings men close together. Labor for daily bread, says Bondaref, restores reason to those that have lost it by separation from the life natural to mankind, and gives happiness and contentment to men by occupying them in work, which is undoubtedly advantageous and cheery, assigned by God Himself or by the laws of nature.

Labor for daily bread, says Bondaref, is a remedy which saves humanity. Let men acknowledge this first law as the law of God and unchangeable, let each man acknowledge it as his infallible duty to labor for his daily bread, in other words, to earn his own living with his hands, and all men will be united in faith in one God, in love to one another, and the calamities which overwhelm mankind will be done away with.

We are so accustomed to an order of life which takes the opposite for granted, that is, that wealth, as a means of freeing men from the necessity of daily labor, is either the blessing of God or the highest social position, that, if we do not examine into this position, we prefer to call it narrow, one-sided, idle, and stupid. But we must seriously consider the matter, and judge whether this stand is not just.

As we test every kind of theory, religious and political, let us also test Bondaref's theory as a theory. Let us see what would result if, according to Bondaref's idea, the religious sermonizing were to direct its forces to the explanation of this law, and all men were to recognize this primary law of labor as obligatory.

All would work and eat the bread that resulted from their labors, and bread and objects of the first importance would no longer become objects of purchase and sale. Then what would result?

The result would be that there would be no more people perishing of want. If one man, in consequence of unfortunate circumstances, did not by his labor secure enough food for himself and his family, another, in consequence of fortunate circumstances having got more than he needed, would give to the one lacking, would give because, as he no longer sells, he would have nothing else to do with his superfluity. The result would be that a man would not be subjected to the temptation of acquiring bread by shrewdness, and not having this temptation, he would not use force or cunning, he would not need to do as he does at the present time.

If he employed cunning or violence, it would be only because he loved cunning and violence, and not because they are indispensable, as they are at the present time.

For the weak, for those that had not the strength for any reason to earn their own bread, or that had in some way lost it, there would be no necessity of selling themselves or their labor, or, as it sometimes happens, their very souls, to get their bread.

There would be none of our present universal striving to get rid of manual labor, and shirking it on others, — the striving to crush the weak with labor and to free the strong from all work.

There would be none of that disposition of the human mind whereby all the forces of the human intellect are directed, not to lightening the work of the workers, but to make the leisure of the leisure more light and attractive. The participation of all men in manual labor, and recognizing it as the chief of all human actions, would

do what a man would do with a cart which stupid people would drag with the wheels in the air, while he would turn it over and set on the wheels on the ground. It would not break the cart and it would go easily.

Now, our life with its scorn and dislike of manual labor and our justification of this false life is the cart which we drag with the wheels in the air. And all our justifications of this work do not profit us, since we do not turn the cart over and set it where it should stand.

Such is Bondaref's idea, and I fully share it. His idea presents itself before me as follows: There was a time when men ate one another. The consciousness of the unity of all men developed to such a degree that cannibalism became impossible, and they ceased to eat one another. Then came the time when men by force took away the labor of others and reduced them to slavery. The conscience of men developed to the point that this became impossible. Violence which still persisted in hidden forms was annihilated in its coarser manifestation; man no longer openly took possession of the labor of another.

In our time there exists the form of violence in so far as men, profiting by the necessity of others, subject them to themselves. According to Bondaref's idea, the time has now come for such recognition of the unity of man that it is no longer possible for men to take advantage of others' necessities — in other words, their hunger and nakedness — to bring them into subjection, and for men, acknowledging the law of manual labor as obligatory on every one, to acknowledge their duty unconditionally, by refraining from the sale of objects of the first importance in case of necessity to feed, clothe, and house one another.

Again, on the other hand, I look on Bondaref's work as follows: We often happen to hear criticisms on the insufficiency of certain prohibitory laws or commands, that is to say, regulations concerning what must not be done. They say: Positive laws or commands are necessary, regulations are necessary as to what exactly

[1] *Golod i kholod.*

must be done. They say the five commands of Christ: (1) not to look down on any one, or call any one a fool, or be angry with any one; (2) not to look on copulation as a source of satisfaction, not to desert husband or wife when once a union has been consummated; (3) not to bind oneself with an oath to any one, not to fetter one's free will; (4) to bear insults and violence and not to resist; and (5) not to consider any men as enemies, but to love your enemies as well as your neighbors — they say that these five commands of Christ all prescribe only what is necessary not to do, but that there are no commands or laws prescribing exactly what must be done; and indeed it may seem strange that in Christ's teaching there are no definite commands as to what must be done. But this seems strange only to one who does not believe in Christ's teaching itself, included, not in the five commands, but in the teaching itself of truth.

The teaching of truth expressed by Christ is not found in laws and commands; it is found in one thing, in the meaning that it gives to life. The meaning of this teaching is in this one thing, that life and the blessing of life are not in personal happiness, as people suppose, but in the service of God and man. And this position is not a prescription which should be carried out for the sake of receiving a reward, is not a mystic expression of something mysterious and incomprehensible, but is the revelation of a hitherto hidden law of life, is an indication that life can be a blessing only when it is thus understood. And therefore all Christ's positive teaching of truth is expressed in one thing: *Love God, and thy neighbor as thyself.* And there can be no explanations of this position. It is one thing because this one thing is all. Christ's laws and commands, like the Jewish and Buddhist laws and commands, are only indications of those conditions in which the temptations of the world seduce men from the true understanding of life. And therefore there may be many laws and commands, but there can be only one positive teaching of life, of what must be done.

The life of every man is a movement in a certain di-

rection; whether he wishes or not, he moves, he lives. Christ shows a man his path, and moreover points out the turns from the true path which may lead him into falsehood, and there may be many such indications — these are the commands.

Christ gives five such commands, and those He gives are of such kind that up to the present time it is impossible to add one to them, or to take one away. But only one single indication of the direction of the path was given — since there cannot be more than one straight line indicating any direction. Hence the idea that in Christ's teaching there are only prohibitions, but no positive commands, is right for those only that do not know or believe in the teaching of the truth, in the direction of the true path of life, pointed out by Christ. Men who do not believe in the truth of the way of life pointed out by Christ cannot find positive commands in Christ's teaching. All positive activity, even the most varied, flowing from the teaching of the right way of life, is clear and always undoubtedly definite for them.

Men who believe in the way of life are, according to Christ's sentence, like a fountain of living water, that is, like a fountain proceeding from the earth. All their activity is like the flowing of water, which flows steadily in all directions in spite of the obstacles blocking it. A man who believes in Christ's teaching can just as little ask what he must positively do, as the spring of water flowing from the earth can ask such a question. It flows, refreshing the soil, the turf, the trees, the birds, the animals, and men. The same is true of the man who believes in Christ's doctrine of life.

The man who believes in Christ's teaching will not ask what he must do. The love which constitutes the force of his life faithfully and undoubtedly shows him where he must act and what he must do, both before and after. To say nothing of those directions of which Christ's teaching is full — as to what is the first and most important act of love, as to feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, helping the needy and imprisoned — both reason and conscience

and feeling, everything, lead us to this: — before all other acts of love toward living men, to support this life of our brethren, to deliver them from suffering and death which overtakes them in their unequal struggle with nature, in other words, lead us to the first act necessary for the life of men — to primitive, coarse physical labor on the soil.

Just as a spring cannot ask where it is to send its water, whether it shall spurt up on the grass and the leaves of the trees, or trickle down to the roots of the grass and the trees, so the man that believes in the teaching of truth cannot ask what he must do first of all; whether to teach them, defend them, amuse them, give them the pleasures of life, or support them when they are perishing from need.

And just as the spring of water flows down over levels and fills the ponds, and quenches the thirst of animals and men, only after it has soaked the soil, so also the man that believes in the teaching of truth can help along the less pressing demands of men, only after he has satisfied the first demand, that is, when he has helped in the nourishment of men, in their salvation from destruction in consequence of their struggle with need.

The man that follows, not in word, but in deed, the teaching of truth and love, cannot be mistaken in the direction in which first of all he must apply his activity. Never can a man who applies the meaning of his life to the service of others, be so mistaken as to begin to help cold and hungry humanity by founding cannon, by the manufacture of elegant objects, or by playing on the fiddle or on the pianoforte.

Love cannot be stupid. As love for one person does not permit the reading of novels to him when he is hungry or putting on him costly earrings when he is cold, so love for men does not allow it to be possible to serve them by amusing the prosperous, while allowing the cold and hungry to die of their necessities.

True love — expressed in deeds, not words — not only cannot be stupid, but it is the only thing that gives true sagacity and wisdom.

And therefore the man penetrated with love will make no mistake, and will always do first of all what love for men demands — that which supports the life of the cold, the hungry, and the despondent; — he does not support the life of the cold, the hungry, and the despondent, but the struggle, the out and out struggle with nature, does. Only the man that wishes to deceive himself and others can in the time of danger and men's battle with necessity turn aside from aiding them, augment the necessity of men, and persuade himself and those that are perishing before his eyes, that he is occupied in devising for them means of salvation.

No genuine man who applies his life to the service of others will say this. And if he says this, never will he find in his conscience any support for his mistake; he will find it only in the crafty doctrine of the division of labor.

In all expressions of genuine popular wisdom from Confucius to Mohammed he will find one thing, will find it with especial force in the Gospels, will find the demand for the service of men, not according to the theory of the subdivision of labor, but in the simplest, most natural, and only necessary way, will find the need of serving the sick, the imprisoned, the cold, and the starving. But to extend aid to the sick, the imprisoned, the cold, and the starving is impossible otherwise than by one's immediate instant labor, because the sick, the cold, and the hungry will not wait, but will die of cold and hunger. To the man who fulfils the teaching of the truth, his life, consisting in service of others, points to this fundamental law expressed in the first book of Genesis: *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread*, which Bondaref calls fundamental and makes mandatory.

This law is really such for men who do not acknowledge that significance of life which Christ made evident to men, and such it was for men before Christ's day, and such it remains for men who do not acknowledge Christ's teaching. It demands that every man, according to God's will, expressed both in the Bible and in

reason, should earn his own daily food. This law is mandatory. Such was this law even before the meaning of life was made plain to men in the teaching of the truth.

But in the loftiest consciousness of the meaning of life discovered by Christ, the law of manual labor, still remaining true, stands as a part of the only positive doctrine of Christ concerning the service of others, and receives the significance, not of a positive, but of a prohibitory, law. This law, in the Christian conscience, points only to an ancient temptation of men, to what a man ought not to do if he would avoid departing from the path of the true life.

For a man of the Old Testament, who did not acknowledge the teaching of the truth, this law has the same significance: earn your bread with your own hands. For the Christian its significance is negative. This law says: Do not suppose it possible to serve men while swallowing up the labor of others, and while you do not earn your subsistence with your own hands. This law, for the Christian, points to one of the oldest and most terrible temptations that people suffer from. Against this temptation, terrible in its consequences, and so very ancient that we with difficulty may recognize this temptation, not as a natural quality of a man, but as a deception, this doctrine of Bondaref is directed, — a doctrine obligatory on the Old Testament man who believes in the Scriptures, and the Christian who believes in the Scriptures, and the man that does not believe in the Scriptures, but follows his reason alone, and for the man that recognizes the teaching of the truth.

Reader and dear brother, whoever you are, I love you and not only do not wish to offend or affront you, to bring evil into your life, but I do wish one thing, and that is to serve you.

I might write much, and I should like to write much, in order to prove the truth of this position, and to refute the various and complicated arguments against it, which are on the lips of each one of us. We know that we are

to blame, and consequently we are always ready with a justification.

But, however much I wrote, however well I wrote, however correct I might be logically, I should not persuade a reader, if he used his reason to argue against me and his heart should remain cold. I fear this, I fear the pride of my own intellect, that my coldness may injure you.

And so I ask you, reader, even though for a time you set aside the activity of your mind, not to argue, nor to prove, but merely to question your heart. Who ever you are, however gifted, however kind to the men and women around you, in whatever condition you may be, can you be contented at your tea, your dinner, your work as a government employee, as an artist, a student, a physician, a teacher, if you hear or see at your doorstep a man cold, hungry, sick, or tormented?

No!

But here they are always with us — if not at our steps, then ten yards or ten miles away. They are here, and you know it!

And you cannot be satisfied, you cannot enjoy yourself, unless you rectify this state of things. In order that you may not see them at your door, you must shut yourself away from them, you must hold them at a distance by your coldness, or else go where they are not to be found. But they are everywhere.

And even if a place were found where you would not see them, you would not get away from your consciousness of the truth. How could you? You yourself know it, and the teaching of this book tells this to you: —

"Let yourself down to him who seems to you below but is really above; stand in line with those that are feeding the hungry, clothing the cold; fear nothing," there will be nothing worse, but much that is better in all directions. Stand in line, put your ignorant weak hands to the first task that will feed the hungry, clothe the cold; undertake manual labor, the struggle with nature: and you will feel for the first time the firm soil underneath

your feet; you will feel that you are at home, that you are free and strong; and you will experience the wholesome, unpoisoned pleasures which you will not find behind closed doors or drawn curtains.

You will recognize joys which you never have known before. You will know for the first time those simple, strong men and women, your brethren who far away from you, have hitherto been supporting you; and to your amazement you will see in them such virtues as you had not suspected before, you will see in them such modesty, such kindliness to you yourself, especially, as you will feel you have not deserved.

Instead of the scorn, the ridicule, which you expected, you will see such gentleness, such gratitude, such respect for you, because after you had lived all your days and despised them, you suddenly woke up and with unaccustomed hands wanted to help them.

You will see that what seemed to you an island on which you were sitting, having been sand from the sea that swallowed you up, is a swamp in which you were sinking; and that the sea which you feared is dry land on which you walk firmly, calmly, joyously, as could not be otherwise, because from the deception into which you did not go yourself, but were led into it, you have returned to the truth; from the deviation from God's will, you have returned to its fulfilment.

1888.

STOP AND THINK!

I

THE editor of a Paris review, thinking that the opinions of two celebrated writers on the state of mind of the present day would interest me, has sent me two extracts from French newspapers, one being a speech by M. Zola, delivered at the banquet of the General Students' Association, the other a letter from M. A. Dumas to the editor of the *Gaulois*.

These extracts did indeed interest me profoundly, both on account of their seasonableness and the renown of their authors, and because it would be difficult to find in current literature in a more succinct, vigorous, and brilliant form, an expression of the two fundamental forces, the resultant of which impels humanity along. I mean on the one hand the force of routine which tends to keep humanity in its present course, and on the other that of reason and love which impels it toward the light.

M. Zola disapproves of that faith in something vague and ill-defined which their new guides are recommending to the youth of France; and counsels them to believe in something which is neither clearer nor better defined, namely, science and work.

A little-known Chinese philosopher and founder of a religion, named Lao-Tze (the first and best translation of whose book, "The Way of Virtue," is that by Stanislas Julien), takes as the foundation of his doctrine the "tao," a word meaning "reason," "way," "virtue." If men follow the law of "tao," they will be happy. But the "tao," according to M. Julien's translation, is only attainable by "not-acting."

All the ills besetting mankind arise, according to Lao-Tze, not from man's neglect to do what is necessary, but because he does what is unnecessary, so that if men would practise what he calls "not-acting," they would be rid not only of their personal calamities, but also of those inherent in every form of government, the latter being the subject of which the Chinese philosopher particularly treats.

Lao-Tze's idea appears strange, but it is impossible not to agree with him if one considers what are the results from the activities of the great majority of the men of our century.

Let all men apply themselves to work, says M. Zola, and work will give them health and happiness, and will free them from the torment of the Infinite. Work, yes; but at what are we to work? Manufacturers and sellers of opium, tobacco, and brandy, every gambler on the Stock Exchange, all inventors and manufacturers of engines of destruction, all the military, all jailers and executioners, — all work, but it is evident that humanity would be the gainer if all these workers ceased their work.

But perhaps M. Zola's recommendation has reference only to such work as is inspired by science? As a matter of fact the purpose of the greater part of M. Zola's speech is to uphold science, which he thinks is being attacked. Well! From various unappreciated authors I am continually receiving pamphlets, treatises, and printed books and manuscripts, the results of their scientific work.

One has finally decided the question of the Christian gnosiology, another has written a book on the cosmic ether, a third has solved the social question, a fourth the Eastern question, a fifth edits a Theosophical Review, a sixth (in a thick volume) solves the knight's tour problem in chess.

All these people work assiduously and in the name of science, but I have no hesitation in saying that the time and work of my correspondents have been spent in a manner not only useless but even harmful, for they have

not been the only people whose labor has been spent on this useless work; thousands of people have been occupied in making the paper, the type, and machines needed to print their works, and in feeding, clothing, and housing these scientific laborers.

Work for science? But the word science is a term so vague and ill-defined that what some people consider to be science is considered by others to be utterly futile, and this is the case not only with outsiders but even with the priests of science themselves. While those savants who favor a spiritual explanation of life, look upon jurisprudence, philosophy, and even theology as the most necessary and important of sciences, the Positivists consider these very sciences as childish twaddle devoid of scientific value; and, *vice versa*, sociology, which the Positivists look upon as the science of sciences, is considered by the theologians, philosophers, and spiritualists as an arbitrary and useless collection of observations and assertions. But more than this, even in one and the same branch of philosophy or natural science, each system has ardent defenders and equally ardent detractors, equally competent, yet holding diametrically opposite opinions.

Finally, does not each year witness fresh scientific discoveries, which, after exciting the wonder of the mediocrities of the whole world, and bringing fame and fortune to their inventors, are eventually found to be nothing but ridiculous errors even by those who promulgated them?

We all know that what the Romans looked upon as science par excellence, as the most important of occupations, and one which showed how superior they were to the barbarians, was rhetoric, that is to say, an exercise which nowadays is regarded with derision, which with us does not even rank as a science. It is equally difficult for us to understand the state of mind of the learned during the Middle Ages, who were quite convinced that all science was centered in scholasticism.

Unless, then, our century be quite an exception, — which we have no right to suppose, — but little reflec-

tion is required to convince us that, among the subjects principally engrossing the attention of our learned men to-day, there are some which will be looked upon by our descendants as we now look upon the rhetoric of the ancients and the scholasticism of the Middle Ages.

II

M. Zola's speech is chiefly directed against certain leaders who are trying to direct the younger generation back to religious beliefs; for M. Zola, as a champion of science, looks upon himself as their opponent; but in reality such is not the case, for his reasoning is based upon the same foundation as that of his adversaries: on faith, as he himself admits.

It is a generally received opinion that religion and science are opposed to each other. And such is really the case, but only with reference to any given time. That is to say, what has been regarded by the people of one time as science very often becomes religion for their descendants. What is usually connoted by the term religion is generally the science of the past, while that which is called science is to a large extent the religion of the present.

We say that the statements of the Hebrews that the world was created in six days, that children are punished for the sins of their fathers, that certain maladies can be cured by the sight of a serpent, are the data of religion; while we call data of science the statements of our contemporaries that the world created itself while turning around a center which is everywhere, that all the various species arose from the struggle for existence, that criminals are the product of heredity, that there exist micro-organisms in the shape of commas which cause certain diseases. It is easy to see by reverting in imagination to the state of mind of an ancient Hebrew, that for him the creation of the world in six days, the wound-curing serpent, etc., served as the data of science at its highest degree of development, just as for a man of our

time do the laws of Darwin, the commas of Koch, heredity, etc.

And just as it was not exactly in the creation of the world in six days, the wound-curing serpent, etc., that the Hebrew believed, but rather in the infallibility of his priests, and hence in the truth of their assertions; even so the great majority of the cultured people of our time believe neither in the formation of the world by rotation, nor in heredity, nor in comma-like bacilli, but in the infallibility of their lay priests who are called scientists, who affirm whatever they pretend to know, with the same assurance as did the Hebrew priests.

I will even say that if the priests of old, amenable to no control save that of their colleagues, permitted themselves sometimes to digress from the truth merely for the pleasure of astonishing and mystifying their public, the priests of modern science have done as much, with equal effrontery.

The greater part of what is called religion is but the superstition of the past; the greater part of what is called science is no more than the superstition of the present day. The proportion of error and of truth is, I suspect, about the same in the one as in the other. Hence to work in the name of any belief, be it religious or scientific, is not only a doubtful means of ameliorating the life of mankind, but it is a dangerous proceeding which may produce more harm than good.

To consecrate one's life to the fulfilment of the duties imposed by religion, — prayers, communion, almsgiving; or, following the advice of M. Zola, to devote it to some scientific work, — is to run too great a risk, for one may find on the eve of one's death that the religious or scientific principle, in whose service one has spent one's whole life, is nothing but an absurd mistake!

Even before reading the speech in which M. Zola holds up work, whatever kind it may be, as a kind of virtue, I had always been astonished at the strange opinion (current especially in Western Europe) in regard to work. I always felt that it was excusable only in an irrational creature, such as the ant in the fable, to elevate work

to the rank of a virtue and to make a boast of it. M. Zola assures us that work makes men kind; the contrary has always been true in my experience. Without considering selfish work, which is always bad, the object of which is the well-being or aggrandizement of the worker, even "work for its own sake," the pride of the worker, renders both ants and men cruel. Which of us does not know these men, untouched by considerations of truth and kindliness, who are always so busy that they not only never have time to do good, but cannot even ask themselves whether their work is not harmful? You say to these people: "Your work is useless, perhaps even pernicious, for the following reasons; pause and consider them for a moment." They will not listen to you, but scornfully reply: "You men have leisure to reason about such matters, but what time have I for discussions? I have worked all my life and work does not wait; I have to edit a daily paper with a circulation of half a million; I have the army to organize, the Eiffel Tower to build, the Chicago Exhibition to arrange, to cut through the Isthmus of Panama, to make investigations on the subject of heredity, telepathy, or to find out the number of times such and such a word occurs in the works of such and such a classic author."

The most cruel of men, the Neros and the Peter the Greats, have been constantly active, never pausing or giving themselves a moment free from occupation or distraction.

Even if work is not a vice, it can from no point of view be looked upon as a merit.

Work can no more be considered a virtue than can nutrition; work is a necessity of which one cannot be deprived without suffering, and to elevate it to the rank of a merit is as monstrous as it would be to do the like for nutrition. The only explanation of this strange value attributed to work in our society is that our ancestors regarded laziness as an attribute of nobility, almost of merit, and that people of our time are still somewhat influenced by the reaction from that prejudice.

Work, the exercise of our organs, cannot be meritorious, for it is simply a physical necessity of man in common with all other animals, as is shown by a tethered calf galloping round and round, or, among ourselves, by the silly exercises to which rich and well-fed people of the leisured classes betake themselves, finding no better use for their mental faculties than reading novels and newspapers, or playing chess and cards, or for their muscles than gymnastics, fencing, lawn tennis, and horse-racing.

In my opinion, not only is work not a virtue, but in our defectively organized society it is more often a means of moral anæsthesia, just as are tobacco, wine, and other means of drowning thought and hiding from ourselves the disorder and emptiness of our lives; and it is precisely as such that M. Zola recommends work for young people.

III

There is a great difference between the letter of M. Dumas and the speech of M. Zola, without mentioning the external difference, namely, that the speech of M. Zola seems to court the approbation of the young men to whom it is addressed; whilst the letter of M. Dumas does not flatter young men, does not tell them that they are important persons and that everything depends on them (a notion which they ought never to cherish if they wish to be good for anything), but, on the contrary, points out to them their habitual faults, their presumption, and their levity. The principal difference between these two articles is that the speech of M. Zola aims at keeping men in the path they are in, by making them think that what they know is precisely what is necessary for them to know, and that what they are doing is exactly what they ought to do; whilst the letter of M. Dumas shows them that they are ignorant of the essentials of what they ought to know, and are not living as they should live.

The more men believe that they can be moved to a better state of things without effort of their own, by some external force acting of itself, whether religion or science, and that they have only to work on in the existing order, — with the more difficulty will this change be accomplished; and it is in this, above all, that the speech of M. Zola errs.

On the contrary, the more men believe that it only depends on themselves to modify their relations toward one another, and that they can do so when they will, by loving one another instead of tearing one another to pieces as they now do, the more will such change become possible. The more men allow themselves to follow this suggestion, the more will they be drawn to realize the prediction of M. Dumas. And in this lies the great merit of M. Dumas's letter.

M. Dumas does not belong to any party or to any religion; he has as little faith in the superstitions of the past as in those of the present, and it is just for this reason that he observes, that he thinks, and that he sees, not only the present but also the future, in the same way as those who in ancient times were called seers. It may appear strange to those who, when reading an author's works, see only the contents of his book and not the soul of the author, that M. Dumas — who wrote "La Dame aux Camélias" and "L'Affaire Clémenceau" — that this same Dumas sees into the future and prophesies. But, however strange it may seem, prophecy, though uttered not in the desert, nor by Jordan's banks, nor from the mouth of a hermit clothed in skins of beasts, but appearing in a daily paper on the banks of the Seine, — it is none the less prophecy.

The words of M. Dumas have all the characteristics of a prophecy: first, they are entirely opposed to the general ideas of the people in the midst of whom they are uttered; secondly, all who hear them feel their truth; and thirdly, above all, it urges men to realize what it foretells.

M. Dumas predicts that men, after having tried

everything, will begin seriously to apply to life the law of brotherly love, and that this change will come about sooner than one expects. The proximity of this change, even its possibility, may be disputed; but it is evident that, if it does come about, it will solve all contradictions, all difficulties, and will avert all the ills which the end of our century threatens.

The only objection, or rather the only question, that can be put to M. Dumas is: If love of our neighbor is possible to, and inherent in, human nature, why have so many thousand years passed (for the command to love God and one's neighbor is not a command of Christ, but dates back to Moses) during which men have known this means of happiness and yet have not practised it? What cause prevents the manifestation of a sentiment so natural and so beneficent to humanity?

It is evident that it is not enough to say: Love one another. That has been said for three thousand years; it has been continually repeated in all tones, from all platforms, religious and even secular, but men continue none the less to exterminate instead of love one another. In the present day no one can doubt that if men, instead of tearing one another to pieces, — each seeking his own happiness, that of his family, or that of his country, — would but help one another; if they would replace selfishness by love, and would organize their lives on the communistic instead of the individualistic principle (as the sociologists like to express it in their barbarous jargon); if they loved one another as each loves himself, if, at least, they did not do to others what they would not like done to them, as was said two thousand years ago, — the amount gained of that personal happiness which each man seeks would be greater, and human life in general would be reasonable and happy instead of being what it is now, a succession of contradictions and sufferings.

No one doubts but that if men continue to take away from one another the ownership of the land and the products of their labor, a retaliation by those who have been thus robbed must be expected, and that the op-

pressed will retake with violence and vengeance what they have been deprived of. Every one knows also that the preparations for war made by the different nations lead on to terrible massacres, to the ruin and degeneration of all the peoples who participate in this circle of armaments. No one doubts but that if the present order of things be prolonged for some dozens of years, the result will be ruin, imminent and general. We have only to open our eyes to see the abyss toward which we are advancing. But it seems that Christ's prophecy is fulfilled among the men of to-day; they have ears to be deaf with, and eyes to be blind with, they have reason to misunderstand with.

The men of to-day continue to live as they have always lived, and do not leave off doing what must inevitably lead to their ruin. Moreover, the men of our Christian society acknowledge, if not the religious law of love, at least the moral obligation of the Christian principle, "not to do to others what they would not that others do to them," but they do not act upon it. Evidently some secret but overwhelming reason prevents them from doing what is to their advantage — what would save them from the dangers that menace them, and what the law of their God and their conscience alike dictate to them. Are we to conclude that love applied to life is a chimera? If so, how is it that for so many centuries men have allowed themselves to be deluded by this unrealizable dream? It must be high time to recognize its futility. But mankind can neither resolve to follow the law of love in their lives nor to give up the idea.

Why is this? What is the reason of this contradiction, enduring so many centuries? It is not because men of our day lack either the desire or the possibility to do what is dictated to them, both by their common sense and by the danger of their position, and above all, by the law of that which they speak of as God and their conscience. But it is just because they are doing what M. Zola advises them to do: they are so busy, they are all so engrossed in work commenced long ago, and it is impossible for them to pause to collect their thoughts

and consider what they ought to be. All great revolutions in the life of men commence in thought. Let but a change take place in men's thoughts, and action will follow the direction of the thought as certainly as the ship follows the direction of the rudder.

IV

In the words of His first sermon Christ did not tell men to love one another (He taught this to His disciples later on), but, like John the Baptist before Him, He preached repentance, *μετάνοια*, that is to say, a change of opinion with regard to life: *μετανοεῖτε*, change your conception of life, said He, or you will all perish. The meaning of your life cannot consist in the pursuit of your personal well-being, or in that of your family or your nation, because that well-being can be attained only by detriment of that of your neighbor. Know then that the meaning of your life can lie only in fulfilling the will of Him who sent you into this life, and who demands from you, not the pursuit of your personal interests, but the accomplishment of His own purpose: the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Μετανοεῖτε, change your conception of life, or you will all perish, said He, eighteen hundred years ago; and, today, this is incessantly urged by all the contradictions and all the ills of our time, results of the fact that men have not heeded, and have not accepted the conception of life which he proposed to them. *Μετανοεῖτε*, said He, or you will all perish. And the alternative is still the same. The only difference is that now it is more pressing. If, two thousand years ago, at the time of the Roman Empire, even at the time of Charles V., or even before the Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, it was possible not to see the vanity, I will even say the absurdity, of attempting to insure personal happiness, the welfare of the family, the nation, or the State, by struggling against all who seek the same thing, — that illusion has now become absolutely impossible to any man who

will pause in his work, be it only for a moment, and reflect upon what he is, upon the state of the world about him, and upon what he ought to be. If, then, I were asked for the most important advice I could give, that which I considered to be the most useful to the men of our century, I should simply say: In the name of God, stop a moment, cease your work, look around you, consider what you are and what you ought to be, — think of the ideal.

M. Zola says that people should not aspire, or believe in a superior power, or trouble about the ideal. Perhaps M. Zola understands by the word "ideal," either the supernatural, that is to say, the theological rubbish about the Trinity, the Church, and the Pope, etc., or *the unexplained*, as he calls the vast forces of the universe into which we are plunged. And in this case men would do well to follow M. Zola's advice. But, in reality, the ideal is neither supernatural nor unexplained. On the contrary, it is the most natural of things; I will not say it is the most thoroughly explained, but it appeals to the human mind with more certainty than anything else.

The ideal in geometry is the perfectly straight line, and the circle the radii of which are equal; in science, it is exact truths; in morals, perfect virtue. Although all these things, straight line, exact truth, and perfect virtue alike, have never existed, not only are they more natural, more known, and more *explicable* than all our other knowledge; but they are the only things we truly and certainly do know.

It is commonly said that reality is that which exists, or in other words, only that which exists is real. The contrary is, however, the case; the true reality, that which we truly know, is that which never existed. The ideal is the only thing which we know with certainty, and it has never existed. It is only thanks to the ideal that we know anything at all, and that is why the ideal alone can guide mankind in their lives, both individually and collectively. The Christian ideal has been before us for eighteen centuries; it shines in our time with such intensity that it is extremely difficult to avoid seeing that

all our ills proceed from the fact that we do not accept its guidance; but the more difficult it becomes not to see this, the greater are the efforts made by some people to persuade us to do as they do, to close our eyes so as not to see it. In order to be absolutely certain to arrive safely in port, we ought, before all else, to throw overboard the compass, say they, and forge ahead. Men of our Christian society resemble people who, desiring to pull down some object which annoys them, drag at it in opposite directions, and have no time to agree as to the direction in which they ought to pull. It is only necessary that a man of our day should cease his activity for a moment and reflect, — comparing the demands of his reason and of his heart with the actual conditions of his life, — in order to perceive that his whole life and his every action are in incessant and outrageous contradiction to his reason and his heart. If you were to inquire separately of every civilized human being what are the most moral bases of his conduct, nearly every man would tell you that they are the Christian principles, or at any rate those of justice. In saying this men are sincere. If they acted according to their conscience, men would live as Christians; but it is only necessary to watch them to see that they live like wild beasts. So that for the great majority of men in the Christian world, the organization of their life is not the result of their way of seeing and feeling, but of certain forms which were once necessary, but which now only survive by reason of the inertia of social life.

V

If in past times, — when the evils produced by the pagan way of life were not so evident as now, and, more important still, the Christian principles were not so generally accepted, — men could consciously uphold the bondage of the workers, the oppression of man by man, penal law, and, above all, war, — it has become completely impossible at the present time to explain the *raison d'être* of all these institutions.

In order that men should change their way of living and feeling, they must first of all change their way of thinking; and in order that such a change should come about, men must stop and give their attention to what they ought to understand. To hear what those who wish to save them are shouting, men who run singing toward the precipice must cease their hubbub and stop short.

Let the people of our Christian society pause in their work and reflect for a moment on the state of their lives, and involuntarily they will be led to accept the conception of life given by Christianity; a conception so natural, so simple, and answering so completely the needs of the heart and mind of humanity, that it would arise almost spontaneously in the understanding of any one willing to liberate himself, were it but for a moment, from the entanglement in which he is held by the complications of his own work and the work of others.

For eighteen centuries the feast has been ready; but one man does not come because he has bought a piece of ground, another because he has married a wife, a third because he must go and try his oxen, a fourth because he is constructing a railway, a factory, doing missionary work, working in Parliament, in a bank, or at some scientific, artistic, or literary production. For two thousand years nobody has had the leisure to do what Jesus advised at the beginning of His ministry: to look around him, to consider the results of our work, and to ask himself: *What* am I? *For* what? Can it be that this force, which has produced me with my reason and my desire to love and be loved, has operated only in order to deceive me; so that, having imagined the aim of my life to be my personal well-being, — that my life belongs to me and that I have the right to dispose of it and the lives of other beings as I please, — I should arrive at the conviction that this personal, family, or national well-being cannot be attained; and that the more I strive to attain it, the more I should find myself in contradiction with my reason and the desire to love and be loved, and the more I should experience disillusionment and suffering? Is it not more probable that,

not having come into the world spontaneously, but by the will of Him who sent me, my reason and my desire to love and be loved have been given to guide me in the accomplishment of that will?

Once that *μετάνοια* has taken place in the thought of man, — a pagan and egoistic conception of life replaced by the Christian conception, — the love of one's neighbor will become more natural than strife and egoism are at present. And when once the love of one's neighbor has become natural to man, the new conditions of the Christian life will come about spontaneously, just as in a liquid saturated with salt the crystals commence to form the moment one ceases to stir it.

And in order that such a result should come about and that men should organize in conformity with their conscience, no positive effort is necessary; on the contrary, we have only to stop in the efforts we are now making. If man only employed the hundredth part of his energy, now spent entirely contrary to his conscience in material occupations, to elucidate as much as possible the data of his conscience, to express these as clearly as possible, to make them known, and above all to practise them, the change foretold by M. Dumas and by all the prophets would be accomplished much more quickly and easily than we think, and man would acquire that good which Jesus proclaimed in His good news: "Seek the Kingdom of Heaven and all other things will be added unto you."[1]

[1] This essay was written by Tolstoï in 1893, first in Russian and then (after a mutilated version had appeared in France) again in French. From the latter this version is made. — Tr.

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

IT was, I think, in 1881, that Turgenief, while visiting me, got a French book, entitled "Maison Tellier," out of his portmanteau and gave it to me.

"Read it some day," said he, with pretended indifference; just in the same way as, a year before, he had given me a number of "The Russian Wealth," containing a story by Garshin, then just beginning to write. As in Garshin's case, so now, he was evidently afraid of influencing me one way or the other, and wished to have my altogether unbiased opinion.

"It is by a young French writer," he said. "Look it over: it is not bad. He knows you, and greatly appreciates you," he added, as if wishing to propitiate me. "As a type, he reminds me of Druzhinin; he is like Druzhinin, an excellent son, a good friend, *un homme d'un commerce sûr*,[1] and, besides this, he associates with the working-people, guides them, helps them. Even in his relations with women he reminds me of Druzhinin." And Turgenief told me something astonishing, incredible, as to Maupassant's conduct in this respect.

That particular period, the year 1881, was for me the fiercest time of the inner reconstruction of my whole understanding of life, and in this reconstruction those employments called the fine arts, to which I had formerly given all my powers, had not only lost all their former importance in my eyes, but had become altogether obnoxious to me owing to the unnatural position they had hitherto occupied in my life, and which they generally occupy in the estimation of people of the wealthy classes.

[1] A man to be relied on.

Accordingly, I was not at all interested then in such works as the one recommended to me by Turgenief. But, in order to please him, I read the book.

Whilst reading the first story, "Maison Tellier," notwithstanding its improper and trifling subject, I could not but recognize in its author what is termed genius.

He possessed that special gift, called genius, which consists in the faculty of intense, strenuous attention, applied, according to the author's tastes, to this or that subject; and by means of which the possessor of this capacity sees the things to which he applies his attention in some new aspect overlooked by others. This gift of seeing what others do not see was evidently possessed by Maupassant. But, to judge by the little volume I read, he was unfortunately destitute of the chief of the three qualifications which, in addition to genius, are indispensable to a true work of art. These are: (1) a correct, that is, a moral, relation of the author to his subject; (2) perspicuity or beauty of expression (the two are identical); and (3) sincerity, *i.e.* an unfeigned feeling of love or hatred to the subject depicted. Of these three Maupassant possessed only the last two, and was utterly without the first. He had not a correct, that is, a moral, relation to the subjects he described.

Judging by what I read, I came to the conclusion that Maupassant possessed genius, that gift of attention revealing in the objects and facts of life properties not perceived by others; that he possessd a beautiful form of expression, uttering clearly, simply, and with charm what he wished to say; and that he possessed also the merit of sincerity, without which a work of art produces no effect, that is, he did not merely pretend to love or hate, but did indeed love or hate what he described. But, unhappily, being destitute of the first and perhaps most important qualification for a work of art, of a correct, moral relation to what he described — that is, lacking a knowledge of the difference between good and evil — he loved and described that which he should not have loved and described, and did not love that which he should have loved and described. Thus, in this

little volume, the author described with great minuteness and fondness how women seduce men, and men women; he even, as in "La Femme de Paul," referred to certain obscenities difficult to understand. And not only with indifference, but even with contempt, he described the country laboring people as he would animals.

This ignorance of the distinction between good and evil is especially striking in the story, "Une Partie de Campagne." In this, as a most charming and amusing joke, is related a minute account of how two gentlemen, rowing with bare arms in a boat, seduced, at the same time, one of them an elderly mother, the other a young girl, her daughter.

The sympathy of the author is evidently all the time so much on the side of these two villains, that he, I will not say ignores, but simply does not see what must have been experienced by the seduced mother and maiden daughter, by the father, and by the young man evidently engaged to the daughter. And, therefore, we not only have the revolting description of a disgusting crime represented as an amusing joke, but, moreover, the event itself is described falsely, in that only one side of the subject is presented, and that the most insignificant one, namely, the pleasure taken by the scoundrels.

In this same little volume there is a story, "Histoire d'une Fille de Ferme," which was specially recommended to me by Turgenief, and which specially displeased me by again this incorrect relation of the author to his subject. He evidently sees in all the working folk whom he describes, only animals rising no higher than sexual and maternal love, and therefore his descriptions produce an impression of incompleteness and artificiality.

Lack of understanding of the life and interests of the working people, and the representation of them as semi-brutes moved only by sensuality, spite, and greed, constitute two of the greatest and most serious deficiencies of most of the latest French authors, and, in their number, of Maupassant, who, not only in this story, but in

all those others in which he treats of the people, always describes them as coarse, dull animals at whom one can only laugh. Certainly, French writers ought to know the nature of their own people better than I. But, notwithstanding that I am a Russian and have not lived with French peasants, I still assert that in so representing their own people French authors are wrong, and that the French laboring men cannot be such as they represent. If France — the France we know — with her truly great men, and the valuable contributions with which these great men have enriched science, art, and social life, and have assisted the moral development of humanity; if *this* France exists, then, also, that laboring class on whose shoulders has been, and is, supported this France of great men, must consist, not of brutes, but of men of great mental capacity.

Therefore, I do not believe what is written in novels like "La Terre"[1] and in Maupassant's stories: just as I should not believe what I might be told concerning the existence of a beautiful house standing without foundations. It may well be that the virtues of the people are not so lofty as described to me in "La Petite Fadette" and "La Mare aux Diables."[2] Yet they exist — of that I am firmly persuaded. And a writer who portrays the people only as Maupassant does, describing with relish only the *hanches* and *gorges*[3] of Breton servant-girls, and alluding to the life of laboring men with abhorrence and scoffing, commits a great mistake from the artistic point of view, because he describes his subject only from one, and that the most uninteresting, physical side, utterly leaving out of sight the other and more important spiritual side where lies the essence of the matter.

On the whole, the reading of the little book given me by Turgenief left me altogether indifferent to the young writer.

So repugnant to me were the stories, "Une Partie de

[1] By Zola.
[2] Stories by George Sand.
[3] Hips and throats.

Campagne," "La Femme de Paul," and "L'histoire d'une Fille de Ferme," that I did not then remark the pretty story, "Le Papa de Simon," and the story, excellent in its description of the night, "Sur l'eau."

"Have we not," I thought, "in our time, when there are so many book-writing amateurs, a sufficiency of men of genius, who either do not know how to apply their gift, or else boldly apply it to what it is utterly wrong and unnecessary to describe?" And so I said to Turgenief. After which, I forgot all about Maupassant.

The first work of his I saw after that was "Une Vie," which some one advised me to read. This book immediately made me change my opinion of Maupassant, and from that time forward I read with interest everything signed by his name. "Une Vie" is an excellent novel; not only incomparably the best novel by Maupassant, but perhaps the best French novel, after Hugo's "Les Misérables." Besides a remarkable power of genius, of that peculiar strenuous attention applied to the subject, by which the author perceives quite new features in the life he describes; in this novel are united, almost in equal degree, all the three qualifications for a true work of art: namely, a correct, that is, a moral, relation of the author to his subject; a beautiful form of expression; and sincerity, that is, love toward that which the author describes. Here the purport of life no longer appears to the author as consisting in the adventures of various male and female libertines; here the subject represents, as the title indicates, life; the life of a ruined, innocent, amiable woman, disposed to all that is good, and ruined precisely by the same coarse animal sensuality, which, in his former stories, stood to the author as the central and dominant feature of life. Here all the sympathies of the author are on the side of good.

The form, beautiful in the first stories, is here brought to so high a pitch of perfection as, in my opinion, has been attained by no other French prose writer. And above all, the author does indeed love, and deeply love, that good family which he describes; and he does indeed hate the coarse debauchee who destroys the happiness

and peace of this lovable family, and, especially, ruins the life of the heroine.

And this is why all the events and actors in this tale are so lifelike and memorable. The weak, good-natured, debilitated mother; the upright, weak, attractive father; the still more attractive daughter in her simplicity, naturalness, and sympathy with all that is good; their mutual relations, their first journey, their servants and neighbors; the sly, coarsely sensual, avaricious, fastidious, insolent suitor, who, as usual, deceives the innocent girl by the customary sham idealization of the coarsest instinct; the marriage, Corsica, the beautiful descriptions of nature; the husband's coarse falseness, his seizure of power over the property, his quarrel with his father-in-law, the yielding of the good people, and the victory to insolence; the relations with the neighbors — all this is life itself in all its complexity and diversity. But not only is all this vividly and finely described; every part is, moreover, penetrated by a kind, pathetic tone which involuntarily infects the reader. One feels that the author loves this woman, loves her, not for her external form, but for her soul, for that which is good in her, that he commiserates with her, suffers with her; all of which is involuntarily transmitted to the reader. And the questions, "Why, for what end, is this fine being ruined?" "Ought it indeed to be so?" arise of themselves in the soul of the reader and compel him to examine into the meaning of human life.

Notwithstanding the false notes which here and there appear in the novel, such as, for example, the minute description of the young girl's skin, or the impossible and unnecessary details as to how, through the abbot's advice, the forsaken wife again becomes a mother (details which destroy all the charm of the heroine's purity), or the melodramatic and unnatural account of the injured husband's vengeance; notwithstanding these blemishes, not only did the novel appear to me to be excellent, but I saw behind it, no longer a talented chatterer and joker, not knowing and not wishing to know right from wrong (such as Maupassant had appeared to

me to be from the first book), but a serious man, examining deeply into life, and already beginning to see his way in it.

The next novel by Maupassant which I read was "Bel Ami."

"Bel Ami" is a very unclean book. The author here evidently gives himself full license in describing what attracts him, and at times seems to lose his dominant negative attitude toward his hero, and to pass over on to his side. But on the whole, "Bel Ami," like "Une Vie," has for basis a serious idea and sentiment. In "Une Vie" the fundamental idea is perplexity in the face of the cruel, meaningless, suffering life of an excellent woman ruined by a man's coarse sensuality; whereas here there is not only perplexity, but indignation at the prosperity and success of a coarse, sensual brute, who, by means of this same sensuality, shapes his career and attains a high position in society; indignation also at the depravity of the whole circle of society in which the hero attains success. In the former novel the author seems to ask: "Why, for what end, has this fine being been ruined? What was the cause?" Here, in this latter novel, he seems to answer: "All that is pure and good has perished and is perishing in our society, because this society is depraved, insane, horrible."

The last scene in the novel — the marriage, in a fashionable church, of the triumphant scoundrel, decorated with the order of the Legion of Honor, to a pure girl, daughter of an elderly and previously irreproachable mother, who has been seduced by him; a marriage blessed by a bishop, and regarded as something good and right by all present — expresses this idea with extraordinary force. Notwithstanding its encumbrance with unclean details (in which, it is to be deplored, the author seems to find pleasure) in this novel are seen the same serious demands from life.

Read the conversation of the old poet with Duroy after dinner (when leaving the Walters, if I remember rightly). The old poet bares life before his young friend, and exhibits it as it is, with its eternal and inevitable companion, death.

"It has already got hold of me, *la gueuse*," [1] says he, alluding to death. "It has already shaken out my teeth, snatched away my hair, crippled my limbs, and is just ready to swallow me up. I am already in its power; it is only playing with me, like a cat with a mouse, knowing that I cannot escape. Fame? riches? — what good are they, since with these one cannot buy a woman's love. For it is only a woman's love that is worth living for. And death takes that away. Takes away that; then health, strength, and life itself. It is the lot of every one. And there is nothing more."

Such is the meaning of the words of the aged poet. But Duroy, the successful lover of all the women who please him, is so full of sensual energy and strength that he both hears and does not hear, understands and does not understand, what has been said. He hears and understands, but the source of sensual life in him gushes out from him with such power that this unquestionable truth, while predicting the same end for him, does not disturb him.

It is the presentation of this inner contradiction in life, which, in addition to the satirical value of the novel, constitutes its chief significance. This same idea gleams in the fine scene of the death of the consumptive journalist. The author puts to himself the question: "What is this life? How settle this contradiction between the love of life and the knowledge of inevitable death?" And he does not answer. He seems to seek, to pause, and does not decide either one way or the other. And therefore, in this novel also, the author's moral relation to life continues to be correct.

But in the succeeding novels this moral relation to life begins to be confused. The appreciation of the phenomena of life begins to waver, to grow obscure, and in the last novels it is completely perverted.

In "Mont-Oriol," Maupassant seems to unite the subjects of the two preceding novels and to repeat himself. Notwithstanding the fine descriptions, full of subtle humor, of a fashionable watering-place and the

[1] The old hag.

activity of the doctors in it, we have here the same debauchee, Paul, as trivial and merciless as the husband in "Une Vie"; and the same deceived, ruined, meek, feeble, lonely — always lonely — sympathetic woman, and the same impassive triumph of pettiness and triviality as "Bel Ami."

The idea is the same, but the moral attitude of the author toward what he describes is already much lower, lower than in "Une Vie" especially. The author's inner appreciation of right and wrong begins to get confused. Notwithstanding his abstract wish to be impartially objective, the scoundrel Paul evidently has all his sympathy. Accordingly, the love story of this Paul, and his attempts at and success in seduction, produce a discordant impression. The reader does not know what the author intends; whether he wishes to show all the emptiness and vileness of Paul (who in one scene unconcernedly turns away from and insults a woman merely because her waist is spoiled by her pregnancy with his child); or, on the contrary, to show how pleasant and easy it is to live as did this Paul.

In the succeeding novels, "Pierre et Jean," "Fort comme la Mort," and "Notre Cœur," the moral attitude of the author toward the personages of his stories becomes yet more confused, and in the last named disappears altogether. All these novels bear the seal of indifference, haste, artificiality, and above all, again that same absence of a correct moral relation to life which was evident in the author's first writings. This begins precisely with the time when Maupassant's reputation as a fashionable author had become established, and he had fallen a victim to that temptation, so dreadful in our time, to which every celebrated writer is subjected, and especially one so attractive as Maupassant. On the one hand is the success of his first novels, the praise of the press, and the flattery of society, especially of women; on the other, the continually increasing amount of remuneration (never, however, keeping up with the continually increasing expenses); and yet further the insistent demands of the editors, who, outbidding each

other, beseechingly flatter the author, and, no longer considering the merits of the works offered, accept enthusiastically everything signed by a name now established with the public. All these temptations are so great that they evidently turn his head, and he succumbs to them. He continues to elaborate the form of his novels as well as before, sometimes even better. He even loves and hates what he describes, but no longer loves it because it is good and moral, *i.e.* loved by all, nor hates it because it is evil and hated by all, but only because this or that accidentally pleases or displeases him.

From the time of "Bel Ami," this stamp of hurriedness, and, still more, of artifice, is upon all Maupassant's novels. Henceforth he forsakes the method of his first two novels: he no longer takes as the basis of them certain demands, and on that ground describes the conduct of his character, but writes his novels as do all the common hack novelists; that is, he invents the most interesting and pathetic or the most contemporary persons and situations, and of them composes his novel, adorning it with all those observations which he has had the opportunity of making, and which fit into the framework of the story, and does not in the least trouble himself as to how the events described relate to the demands of morality. Such are "Pierre et Jean," "Fort comme la Mort," and "Notre Cœur."

However much, in French novels, we may have become accustomed to read about "the married life of three," about the ever present lover whose existence is known to every one except the husband, it still remains altogether incomprehensible to us how it should happen that all husbands are always fools, cheated and ridiculous, whereas all lovers, who in the end themselves marry and become husbands, not only are neither ridiculous nor deceived, but are heroic. And it is even less comprehensible how all women are depraved, and yet all mothers saintly.

Yet it is upon these most unnatural and unlikely, and above all deeply immoral, ideas, that "Pierre et Jean" and "Fort comme la Mort" are founded. Therefore,

the sufferings of the characters in these novels affect us but little. The mother of Pierre and Jean, who was able throughout her life to deceive her husband, calls forth little sympathy when she is obliged to confess her sin to her son; and still less, when she justifies herself by saying that she could not but make use of the opportunity of happiness which presented itself. Yet less can we sympathize with the man in "Fort comme la Mort," when, after all his life deceiving his friend and debauching his friend's wife, he is distressed by not being able, in consequence of his old age, to debauch his mistress's daughter also.

The last novel, "Notre Cœur," has no inner purpose but the description of various kinds of sexual love. We find described a satiated, idle libertine, who knows not what he wants, and who at one time lives with a woman as depraved as, and even more depraved than, himself (she not even having the excuse of sensuality, being a mentally depraved woman); and at another time forsakes her and lives with a servant; and then returns to the former, and, as it appears, lives with both. In "Pierre et Jean" and "Fort comme la Mort," there are still some touching scenes; but this last novel, "Notre Cœur," excites only disgust.

The problem in Maupassant's first novel, "Une Vie," stands thus: — "Here is a human being, good, intelligent, lovable, inclined toward all that is good; and this being, for some reason or other, is sacrificed, first, to a coarse, fastidious, stupid, bestial husband, and, after that, to a similar son. And she perishes aimlessly, having given nothing to the world. Why is this?" The author thus puts the question, and, as it were, gives no answer. But the whole of his novel, all his feeling of sympathy with his heroine and condemnation of that which caused her ruin, is a sufficient answer to his question. If there be one man who has understood her suffering and expressed it, then it is already redeemed; as Job put it to his friends, when they complain that no one will know of his sufferings. If the suffering is discovered, understood, then it is redeemed. So here, the author has

discovered, understood, and revealed to men this suffering. And the suffering is redeemed, for, once understood by men, it will sooner or later be put an end to.

In the next novel, "Bel Ami," the question stands, not, "Why do the righteous suffer?" but, "Why do the unrighteous get wealth and fame?" and, "What are wealth and fame, and how are they obtained?" As before, the problem carries with it its own answer; that answer being the denunciation of all that is so highly prized by the crowd of men. The subject of the second novel is still serious, but the moral relation of the author to the subject he describes already weakens considerably, and whereas in the first novel, spots of sensuality which spoil it appear only here and there, in "Bel Ami" these spots multiply, and many chapters are filled with dirt alone, which seems to please the author.

In the next, "Mont-Oriol," the question: "Why, wherefore, the suffering of a worthy woman, and the success and happiness of a wild debauchee?" is no longer put; and it seems tacitly assumed that so it should be. And no longer are any moral demands perceptible; but, without the least necessity, and uncalled for by any artistic consideration, there appear dirty, sensual descriptions. As an example of this violation of artistic taste springing from the incorrect relation of the author to his subject, the minute description in this novel of the heroine in her bath is specially striking. This description has no object whatever, it is connected with neither the external nor inner purpose of the novel.

"Bubbles appear on the pink flesh."

"Well, what of that?" asks the reader.

"Nothing," answers the author. "I describe it because I like such descriptions."

In the next two novels, "Pierre et Jean" and "Fort comme la Mort," no moral attitude at all is perceptible. Both novels are constructed upon vice, deceit, and falsehood, which bring the actors into tragical situations.

In the last novel, "Notre Cœur," the position of the actors is most monstrous, wild, and immoral; and they no longer struggle with anything, but only seek enjoy-

ments, vain, sensual, and sexual: and the author appears to sympathize with their inclinations. The only deduction that can possibly be drawn from this last novel is, that the greatest happiness in life is sexual intercourse, and that, therefore, one must secure this happiness in the pleasantest possible way.

The immoral relation to life is yet more striking in the novelette, "Yvette." The subject of this work, awful in its immorality, is as follows: A beautiful girl, innocent in soul, but depraved in the manners she has learnt in the dissolute circle of her mother, leads a libertine into error. He falls in love with her, but, imagining that the girl knowingly chatters the obscene nonsense she has learnt in the society of her mother, and which she merely repeats, parrot-like, without understanding it, — imagining that the girl is already depraved, he coarsely proposes to her an immoral union. This proposal terrifies, insults her (for she loves him); it opens her eyes to her own position and that of her mother, and she suffers deeply. This profoundly touching scene is beautifully described: the collision between a beautiful, innocent soul and the depravity of the world. And here one might have stopped, but the author, without any external or inner necessity, continues his story, making this man penetrate to the girl at night and debauch her. It is evident that the author, in the early part of the novel, was on the side of the girl, but in the later part he suddenly goes over to the side of the libertine. One impression destroys the other. And the whole novel falls to pieces; crumbles like bread which has not been kneaded.

In all his novels after "Bel Ami" (I am not now alluding to his short stories, which are his chief merit and glory; of them, later), De Maupassant has evidently submitted to the theories now reigning, not only in his Parisian circle, but everywhere among artists; theories that for a work of art, is not only unnecessary to have any clear conception of what is right and what is wrong; but that, on the contrary, the artist must totally ignore all moral questions, there even being a certain artistic

merit in his so doing. According to his theory, the artist may, or should, represent that which is true to life, that which really is; that which is fine, and therefore pleases him; and even that which may be useful as material for "science"; but that to take into consideration questions as to what is moral or immoral, right or wrong, is not the artist's business.

I remember a celebrated painter showing me a picture of his representing a religious procession. It was beautifully painted, but no relation of the artist to his work was perceptible.

"Now tell me, do you regard these ceremonies as good, and necessary to be carried out, or not?" I asked him.

With some condescension to my simplicity, he told me he did not know about that, and did not think it necessary to know; his business was to represent *life*.

"But at least you sympathize with this?"

"I cannot say I do."

"Well, do you, then, dislike these ceremonies?"

"Neither the one nor the other," answered, with a smile of compassion at my silliness, this modern, profoundly cultured artist, who represented life without understanding its purpose, neither loving nor hating its phenomena. And so, it is to be regretted, thought Maupassant.

In his preface to "Pierre et Jean," he says that the writer is usually bidden to "Console me, amuse me, sadden me, touch my heart, make me muse, make me laugh, make me tremble, make me weep, make me think. Only some chosen minds bid the artist compose something beautiful in the form which most agree with your temperament."[1]

It was to gratify this demand of "chosen minds" that Maupassant wrote his novels, naïvely imagining that what is regarded as fine in his circle is indeed that beauty which art must serve.

And in the circle in which Maupassant moved, that beauty which has been, and is, regarded as necessarily to be served by art is principally woman, and sexual

[1] *Faites moi quelque chose de beau dans la forme qui vous conviendra le mieux d'après votre tempérament.*

intercourse with her: woman young and pretty, woman for the most part stripped bare. It was so held, not only by all Maupassant's comrades in "art" — painters and sculptors, novelists and poets — but also by philosophers, teachers of the rising generation. Thus the celebrated Renan, in his work, "Marcus Aurelius," condemning Christianity for not understanding feminine beauty, speaks plainly as follows: "The fault of Christianity is well disclosed; it is too exclusively moral, it has altogether sacrificed beauty. Whereas, in the eyes of a complete philosophy, beauty, far from being a mere superficial advantage, a danger, an inconvenience, is a gift of God, like virtue. It is as worthy as virtue. A beautiful woman expresses one aspect of the divine purpose, one of God's aims, as effectively as a man of genius, or a virtuous woman. She knows this, and hence her pride. She instinctively feels the infinite treasure which she carries in her body; she well knows that, without cleverness, without talent, without any particular virtue, she counts amongst the highest of God's manifestations. And why prohibit her from advantageously exhibiting the gift which has been awarded her, prohibit her from mounting the diamond which she has received?

"Woman, in embellishing herself, accomplishes a duty; she practises an art, an exquisite art, in a sense the most fascinating of arts. Do not let us be led astray by the smile which certain words provoke in the frivolous. (!) Mankind awards the palm of genius to the artistic Greek, who knew how to solve that most delicate of problems, the adornment of the human body, which is to adorn perfection itself; and yet some people wish to see only an affair of rags in the attempt to further God's finest work, woman's beauty. Woman's toilette, with all its delicacies, is, in its way, high art.

"Epochs and nations which know how to succeed in this are the great epochs and the great nations. The history of Christianity shows that by excluding this species of art it postponed the full development of the social ideal which it conceived to a much later period,

when the revolt of men of the world had broken the narrow yoke primitively imposed upon the sect by an exalted fanaticism." [1]

So that, in the opinion of this leader of the young generation, it is only now that the French milliners and hair-dressers have corrected the fault committed by Christianity, and have reëstablished beauty in its true and elevated position.

In order that there should be no doubt as to what we should understand him to mean by beauty, the same celebrated writer, historian, and man of science, wrote the drama, "L'Abbesse de Jouarre," in which he showed that sexual intercourse with woman constitutes an elevated and fine way of serving this beauty. In this drama, which strikes one by its absence of talent, and especially by the coarseness of the conversations between D'Arcy and the Abbesse, where in the first words it becomes evident what kind of love this gentleman discusses with the supposedly innocent and highly moral maiden, who is not in the least shocked — in this drama it is shown that the most highly moral people, in full view of the death to which they are condemned, a few hours before death, cannot find anything better to do than to indulge their animal passion.

So that, in the society in which Maupassant grew up and was educated, the representation of feminine beauty and of sex-love, quite seriously, as a thing long ago admitted and decided by the cleverest and most learned men, was, and is, regarded as the true object of the highest art, of "*le grand art.*"

It is to this very theory, dreadful in its absurdity, that De Maupassant subjected himself when he became a fashionable writer. And, as was to be expected, this false ideal led him, in his novels, into a series of mistakes, and into work weaker and more weak.

In this appears the essential difference between the demands of the novel and of the short story. The novel's object, even its surface object, is the description of one full human life, or of many; and therefore the

[1] "Marc Aurèle," p. 555.

novel writer must have a clear and firm idea of what is right and what is wrong in life.

This De Maupassant had not; on the contrary, according to the theory he held, such was regarded undesirable. Had he been a novelist like some talentless writers of sensual novels, he would, being without genius, quietly have described what was wrong as being right, and his novels would have been full and interesting for people of the same views as himself. But De Maupassant had genius, *i.e.* he saw things in their essentials, and therefore involuntarily discovered truth — he involuntarily saw the evil in that which he wished to consider good.

This is why, in all his novels except the first, his sympathies continually waver. At one moment he represents wrong as being right; at another, he admits that wrong is wrong, and right is right; at another, again, he keeps shifting from the one standpoint to the other. And this destroys the very essence of every artistic impression, the framework on which it is built. People little sensitive to art often think that a work of art possesses unity when the same personages act in it from beginning to end, when all is built on one and the same fundamental plan of incidents, or when the life of one and the same man is described. This is a mistake; and the unity appears true only to the superficial observer. The cement which binds together every work of art into a whole and thereby produces the effect of lifelike illusion, is not the unity of persons and places, but that of the author's independent moral relation to the subject. In reality, when we read or examine the art-work of a new author, the fundamental questions which arise in our mind are always of this kind: "Well, what sort of a man are you? What distinguishes you from all the people I know, and what information can you give me as to how we must look upon our life?" Whatever the artist depicts, whether it be saints or robbers, kings or lackeys, we seek and see only the soul of the artist himself. And if he be an established writer, with whom we are already acquainted, the question is no longer: "Who are you?" but, "Well, what more can you tell

me that is new? From what standpoint will you now illuminate life for me?" Therefore, a writer who has not a clear, definite, and fresh view of the universe, and especially a writer who does not even consider this necessary, cannot produce a work of art. He may write much and beautifully, but a work of art will not result. So it was with De Maupassant in his novels.

If, in his first two novels, and especially in the first, he had an evident and firm sympathy for what is good and dislike for what is evil, it was for two reasons. Firstly, because he evidently heartily loved and respected that person who had served as the prototype of his heroine in "Une Vie," and heartily hated that living or collective personage which served as a model for Duroy (in which he was himself partly personified). Secondly, because in his first novel he had not yet become a fashionable writer, had not succumbed to all the snares of this position, and therefore did not as yet hold the theory, dominant in his circle, that the object of art consists only in making "*quelque chose de beau*."

But when he did begin to write his novels according to this theory, then involuntarily took place what occurred in "Yvette" and in "Notre Cœur," namely, a contradictory estimation of the conduct of his personages. The author does not know whom he should love, and whom hate; therefore neither does the reader. And, not knowing this, the reader takes no interest in the events described. And therefore with the exception of the first two (strictly speaking, excepting only the first one), all the novels of De Maupassant, as novels, are weak; and had De Maupassant left us only these, he would have been merely a remarkable illustration of how a brilliant genius may perish on account of the abnormal society in which it is developed, and those false theories about art which are invented by people who do not love art and therefore do not understand it. But, fortunately, De Maupassant wrote short stories in which he did not subject himself to the false theory he had accepted; writing, not "*quelque chose de beau*," but what touched or revolted his moral feeling. And in these stories (not in all, but in the best

of them), it is observable how this moral feeling grew in the author, and how by degrees, and unconsciously, that which formerly constituted the chief meaning and happiness of his life was for him dethroned, and assessed at its true value.

And the astonishing capacity of every man of real genius, if only he does not do violence to himself under the influence of false theory, lies precisely in this: that genius teaches its possessor, leads him forward on the road of moral development, and makes him love that which deserves love, and hate that which deserves hatred. An artist is only an artist because he sees things, not as he wishes to see them, but as they are. The possessor of genius, the man, may fall into error; but genius, if only free rein be given it as De Maupassant has given it rein in his stories, will disclose, undrape, the object to him; will make him love it if it deserve love, and hate it if it deserve hatred. With every true artist, when, under the influence of his circle, he begins to represent that which he ought not to represent, there happens what happened to Balaam, who, wishing to bless, cursed what should be cursed, and, wishing to curse, blessed what should be blessed; he will involuntarily do, not what he wishes, but what he should do. And this happened in the case of De Maupassant.

There has hardly been another writer who so sincerely thought that all the welfare, all the meaning of life, is in women, in love, and who with such a power of passion described, from all sides, woman and her love; and there has hardly ever been a writer who with such clearness and precision has shown all the awful phases of that same thing which seemed to be highest and to afford the greatest welfare in life. The more he fathomed the question the more it revealed itself; all coverings fell off from it, and left only its awful consequences and its yet more awful essence.

Read of the idiot son; of the night with a daughter in "L'Hermite"; of the sailor with his sister in "Le Port"; read "Champ d'Olives," "La Petite Roque," "Miss Harriet," "Monsieur Parent," "L'Armoire";

read the marriage in "Sur l'Eau"; and, last utterance of all, "Un Cas de Divorce." That which Marcus Aurelius advised, namely, the invention of a means of destroying in one's imagination the attractiveness of this sin; this, in bright artistic images that overturn one's soul, De Maupassant achieves. He wished to praise this love, but the more he examined it the more he cursed it. He cursed it for those calamities and sufferings which it carries with it, for its disappointments, and, above all, for that counterfeit of true love, that deceit, that illusion in it, by which the more confidently a man addicts himself to it the profounder grows his suffering.

A powerful moral growth in the author during his literary activity is written in indelible letters in these exquisite short stories, and in his best book, "Sur l'Eau."

Not only in this dethronement of sexual love (involuntary, and therefore so much the more complete) is this moral growth of the author seen; it is seen in all those increasingly higher moral demands which he applies to life.

Not in sexual love alone does he see the innate contradiction between the demands of the animal and rational man; he sees it in all the organization of the world.

He sees that the world as it is, the material world, is not only not the best of worlds, but, on the contrary, might be quite different (this idea is wonderfully expressed in "Horla"), and that it does not satisfy the demands of reason and love; he sees that there is some other world, or at least, the demand for such another world, in the soul of man.

He is tormented, not only by the unreasonableness of the material world and its ugliness, but by its unlovingness, its disunity. I do not know a more heartrending cry of despair from a strayed man feeling his loneliness, than the expression of this idea in that most exquisite story, "Solitude."

The thing that most tormented De Maupassant, to which he returns many times, is the painful state of loneliness, spiritual loneliness, of man, of that bar which

stands between man and his fellows; a bar which, as he says, is the more painfully felt, the nearer the bodily connection.

What then torments him, and what would he have? What will destroy this bar? What suppress this loneliness? Love. Not that love of woman, a love with which he is disgusted; but pure, spiritual, divine love.

And it is that which De Maupassant seeks; it is toward this savior of life long ago plainly disclosed to man, that he painfully strives amid those fetters in which he feels himself bound.

He cannot yet give name to what he seeks; he would not name it with his lips, not wishing to defile his holy of holies. But his unexpressed yearning, shown in his dread of loneliness, is so sincere that it infects and attracts one more strongly than many and many a sermon about love pronounced only with the lips.

The tragedy of De Maupassant's life is that, being in the most monstrous and immoral circle, he by the force of his genius, that extraordinary light which was in him, had struggled out of the views of that circle and was already near to deliverance, already breathing the air of liberty. But, having spent his last force upon this struggle, not able to make one more effort, he perished unfreed.

The tragedy of this ruin consists in that it continues even now for the majority of so-called educated men of our time.

Men at large have never lived without the conception of a meaning in their life. Always and everywhere there have appeared in the front highly gifted men — prophets, as they are called — who explained to men this meaning and purport of life; and always the ordinary, average men, who have not the strength to make the discovery for themselves, have followed that explanation of life which their prophets have discovered for them.

Our present conception has been, eighteen hundred years ago, revealed by Christianity, simply, clearly, unerringly, and joyously, as is proved by the life of all those who have accepted it and followed that course in life which results from this conception.

But there have appeared those who misinterpret this teaching so that it has become meaningless. And now people are placed in the dilemma of either accepting Christianity as interpreted by Orthodoxy, — "Lourdes," the Pope, the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and so forth, — or of going on with life according to the teachings of Renan and those like him; that is, living without any direction or understanding of life, addicting themselves only to their carnal desires while they are strong, and to their habits when these desires weaken.

People, ordinary people, choose one or the other, sometimes both — first dissoluteness, then orthodoxy. And whole generations live thus, shielding themselves with various theories, invented, not to disclose the truth, but to conceal it. And ordinary, and, more especially, dull people, are content.

But there are others — not many, they are rare — such as was De Maupassant, who themselves with their own eyes see things as they are, see their significance, see the contradictions in life concealed from others, vividly represent to themselves that to which these contradictions must inevitably lead them, and look around them for solutions. They seek these solutions everywhere except where they are to be found, namely, in Christianity; because Christianity appears to them to be an outlived absurdity, repelling them by its deformity. And vainly trying of themselves to discover these solutions, they come to the conviction that solutions do not exist; that it is inherent in life always to carry in oneself these insoluble contradictions. And having come to such a decision, if these people are feeble, unenergetic natures, they put up with such meaningless life; they are even proud of their position, counting their ignorance as a virtue, as a sign of culture. But if they are such energetic, truthful, and talented natures as was De Maupassant, they do not endure this, but in one way or another get out of this absurd life.

In a similar way, people athirst in the wilderness might search everywhere for water except near to those men, who, standing round the spring, defile it, and offer

stinking mire instead of the water which is unceasingly streaming out beneath. In such a position was De Maupassant. He could not believe, it evidently never even entered his head, that the truth he sought had long ago been found, and was so near him. But neither could he believe that man could live in such contradiction as that in which he felt himself encompassed.

Life, according to those theories in which he was educated, which environed him, which were corroborated by all the lusts of his young and physically strong being, — life consists in pleasures of which woman with her love is the chief, and in the double, again reflected, delight of depicting this love and exciting it in others. All this would be well; but, upon examining these delights, amid them appear things quite foreign, hostile to this love and this beauty. Woman, for some reason, is disfigured; she becomes pregnant, and repulsively gives birth to her child; then come the children, undesired children; then deceits, cruelties; then moral sufferings; then mere old age; and then death.

Moreover, is such beauty indeed beauty? And why is all this so? It might be well if one could arrest life, but life advances. And what does this mean? "Life advances" means that the hair drops out, becomes gray; decayed teeth, wrinkles, offensive breath. Even before all ends, everything becomes dreadful, repulsive. Daubed rouge, powder, perspiration, odor, deformity appear. Where, then, is that which I served? Where is beauty? For in that is all. It is gone. There is nothing left. No life.

But not merely is there no life in what seemed to be life; one begins oneself to forsake life, one weakens, loses one's beauty, decomposes; others under one's eyes snatch away those delights in which was all the good of life. Nor is this all. Some sort of possibility of another life begins to glimmer on the mind, something more, some other kind of union with men, with all the world; one that does not admit of all these deceits; a something which cannot by any means be broken; which is true, and always beautiful. .... But

this cannot be. It is only the tempting vision of an oasis, of which we know that it does not exist, and that desert sand is all around.

De Maupassant attained that tragic moment in life when the struggle began between the falsehood of the life about him and the true life of which he began to be conscious. The first throes of spiritual birth had already commenced in him.

And it is these anguishes of birth that he expressed in his best work, especially in his short stories.

Had it been his, not to die in the anguish of birth, but to be born, he would have given us great instructive works; but, as it is, what he has given us in his birth struggle is much. Let us therefore be thankful to this powerful, truthful man for what he has given us.

WHEREIN IS TRUTH IN ART?

PREFACE TO A COLLECTION

"O generation of vipers! how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasury brings forth good things, but an evil man out of the evil treasury brings forth evil. But I say unto you that for every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment.

"For by thy words shalt thou be justified and by thy words shalt thou be condemned." — MATTHEW xii. 34-37.

IN this book, besides stories in which veritable events are described, there are collected histories, traditions, tales, legends, fables, fairy tales of the kind composed and written for the edification of the people.

We have selected such as we consider consonant with the teaching of Christ, and therefore consider good and true.

Many persons and especially children, in reading a story, a fairy tale, a legend, or a fable, ask, first of all: Is what is written true? and, frequently, if they find that what was described could not have happened, they say: That is an idle invention and it is not true.

Persons who judge in this way judge unjustly.

It is not he who knows only what has been, what is, and what will be, that knows the truth, but he who knows what should be in accordance with God's will.

It is not he who only describes how a thing was, and what this, that, and the other man did, that writes the truth, but he that shows what men are doing well, that is to say, in accordance with God's will, and what men are doing ill, that is, against God's will.

The truth — that is the way. Christ said: *I am the way and the truth and the life.*

And therefore it is not the man that keeps his eyes

fastened on the ground that knows the truth, but he that knows by the sun where he is going.

All literary works are good and needful, not when they describe what has taken place, but when they show what ought to be; not when they tell what men have done, but when they set a value on what is right and wrong, when they show men the one strait and narrow way of God's will leading to life.

In order to show this way it is impossible to describe only what has taken place in the world. The world lies sunken in evil and in temptations. If you want to describe the world as it is, then you must describe much falsehood, and there will be no truth in your words. In order that there should be truth in what you describe, you must write, not what is, but what ought to be — describe, not the truth of what is, but the truth of God's kingdom which is near at hand, but not yet come to us.

Hence it results that there are mountains of books in which it says just what has taken place or might have taken place, but all these books are lies, if those that wrote them do not themselves know what is good, and what is bad and do not know, and do not show, the only way that leads men to the kingdom of God. And it happens that there are fairy tales, parables, fables, legends which describe such marvels as never have taken place, and never could take place, and these legends, fairy tales, and fables are true because they point out what God's will always has been, is, and will be, point out what the truth of God's kingdom consists in.

There may be a book — and there are many, many of such novels and stories — in which it is described how a man lives for his passions, torments himself, torments others, endures perils, privation, uses craft, struggles with others, escapes from poverty; and in the sequel is united with the object of his love, and becomes distinguished, rich, and happy. Such a book, even if all that is in it describes things exactly as they existed, and even if there was nothing improbable in it, would nevertheless be false and misleading, because a man living

for himself and his passions, however beautiful his wife might be, and however rich and distinguished he were, could not be happy.

But there might be some legend of Christ and His apostles wandering through the earth and coming to a rich man who would not receive Him, and coming to a poor widow and she took Him in, and then he might command a barrel of gold to come to the rich man, and might send a wolf to the poor widow to devour her last calf, and it might prove a blessing to the widow and a misfortune to the rich man.

Such a story is wholly improbable because nothing of what is described in it ever took place or could have taken place; but it is all true because in it is shown what always should be, in what good consists, in what evil, and toward what a man ought to strive in order to fulfil God's will. Whatever miracles are described, whatever wild beasts talk in human speech, whatever self-flying carpets bear people through the air — legends and allegories and fairy tales will be true if the truth of the kingdom of God is in them.

But if there is none of this truth, let all that is in it be ever so well authenticated, it will all be falsehood, because the truth of the kingdom of God is not in it. Christ Himself spoke in parables and His parables have remained eternally true. He only adds, "Beware how you hear."

1887.

PREFACE TO AMIEL'S JOURNAL

A YEAR and a half ago, I had the privilege of reading Amiel's book — "Fragments d'un journal intime." I was struck by the significance and depth of the subject, the beauty of the thought, and, above all, the sincerity of the book. In reading it I made note of those passages that especially struck me. My daughter undertook to translate these passages, and thus arose these extracts from Amiel's Private Journal; that is, extracts from extracts of Amiel's very voluminous, unprinted journal kept by him from day to day in the course of thirty years.

Henri Amiel was born in 1821, in Geneva, and was early left an orphan. Having completed a course of higher education in Geneva, Amiel went abroad and then spent some years in the universities of Heidelberg and Berlin. After his return to his own country in 1849, though only twenty-eight years old, he received the appointment in the Geneva Academy, first as Professor of Æsthetics and then of Philosophy, and there he remained until his death.

Amiel's whole life was spent in Geneva, where he died in 1881, in no wise distinguished from the great number of those very ordinary professors who, mechanically compiling their lectures from the latest books in their specialty, likewise mechanically repeat them to their hearers, and from the still larger number of unrestrained versifiers who offer their unnecessary but still salable wares to journals having a circulation of tens of thousands. Amiel had not the slightest success either

in teaching or in the domain of literature. He was nearing old age when he wrote the following about himself: —

"What have I been able to extract from the talents which were given to me, from the peculiar conditions of my half-century life? Are all my scribblings, collected together, my correspondence, *these thousands of sincere pages*, my lectures, my articles, my verses, my various memoranda, anything else than dry leaves? To whom and to what have I ever been of any use? Will my name last one day longer than I, and will it mean anything to any one? — An empty life."[1]

After Amiel's death two well-known French authors wrote about him and his diary: his friend, the well-known critic, Edmond Schérer, and the philosopher Caro. Curious was the sympathetic but somewhat condescending tone with which these two writers treated Amiel, and they regretted that he lacked the qualities necessary for a perfectly genuine work. But meantime the genuine labors of these two writers — E. Schérer's critical works and Caro's philosophical writings — have barely outlived their authors; while Amiel's unexpected non-genuine work, his diary, remains a book forever alive, necessary for men, fruitfully affecting their lives.

A writer is dear and necessary to us only in proportion as he opens to us the inner laboratory of his soul, it being taken for granted, of course, that his work is new, and not something done before. Whatever he may have written, — a drama, a text-book, a story, a philosophical treatise, a lyrical poem, a criticism, a satire, — we care only for the inner work of his soul as displayed in the production, and not for the architectural construction according to which he arranges his thoughts and feelings, while largely, and I think always, maiming them.

[1] "*Est-ce que toutes mes paperasses réunies, ma correspondance, ces milliers de pages intimes, mes cours, mes articles, mes rimes, mes notes diverses sont autre chose que des feuilles sèches? A qui et à quoi aurai-je été utile? Est-ce que mon nom durera un jour et signifier a-t-il quelque chose pour quelqu'un? — Vie nulle.* Vol. II., p. 190, 191.

Everything Amiel molded in ready form — his lectures, treatises, verses — is dead; his diary, where, without thinking of form, he spoke with himself, is full of life, vigor, instruction, consolation, and will always remain one of the best books, such as have been unwittingly left to us by men like Marcus Aurelius, Pascal, and Epictetus.

Pascal said: —

"There are only three kinds of men: first, those who, finding God, serve Him; secondly, those who, not finding Him, are occupied in the search for Him; and thirdly, those who neither find Him nor seek for Him.

"The first are reasonable and happy; the last are unreasonable and unhappy; those between are unhappy but reasonable."

I think that the distinction established by Pascal between the first and the second classes, — between those who, as he says, finding God, serve Him with all their hearts, and those who, not finding Him, seek Him with all their hearts, — is not only not so great as he imagined, but does not even exist at all. I think that those who with all their hearts and with agony, — *en gémissant*, as Pascal says, — seek God, are already serving Him. They are serving Him by the fact that by these sufferings their searchings "trace out and open the way for others to reach God," as Pascal himself did in his "Thoughts," and as Amiel did all his life in his journal.

All Amiel's life, as it is presented to us in this journal, was full of this passionate, painful search for God; and the contemplation of this search is the more instructive that it never ceases to be a search, never pauses, never passes over into a consciousness of having discovered the truth, never into preaching.

Amiel never says to himself or to others, "I know the truth now; hear me!" On the contrary, it seems to him, as is characteristic of one who honestly seeks the truth, that the more he knows the more he needs to know, and he unceasingly does all he can to discover more and more of it, and then he is constantly conscious of his ignorance. He keeps conjecturing what Christian-

ity and the condition of the Christian should be, never for a minute pausing on the thought that Christianity is the thing which he professes, and that he himself realizes in his own case the condition of a Christian.

And meantime his whole journal is full of expressions of the deepest Christian understanding and feeling. And these expressions affect the reader with especial force, owing to their very unconsciousness and sincerity. He talks to himself, not thinking of any one hearing him, not striving to seem to believe in what he does not believe, not concealing his sufferings and his searchings.

It is as if you were present without the knowledge of the master at the most mysterious and the profoundest and the most passionate inner work of the soul, ordinarily concealed from the sight of strangers.

And so you may find many far more artistic and eloquent expressions of religious feeling than Amiel's, but it would be difficult to find any more sincere or soul-affecting.

Not long before his death, knowing that his illness might at any moment end with suffocation, he wrote: —

"When one does not dream of having before one a decade, a year, a month of reprieve, when one cannot reckon on more than a dozen hours, and the next night brings the threat of the unknown, it is evident that one must renounce art, science, politics, and be content to commune with oneself, and this is possible even to the very end. This interior soliloquy is the sole resource of the man condemned to death when the execution of the sentence is delayed. He collects himself in his inmost tribunal. He no longer radiates, he psychologizes. He no longer acts, he contemplates. .... Like the hare he returns to his 'form' to die, and this 'form' is his conscience, his thought. It is also his *journal intime*. As long as he can hold his pen, and while he has a moment of solitude, he collects himself before this echo of himself, and converses with his God.

"Nevertheless there is not here a moral examination, an act of contrition, a cry of help. It is only an Amen of submission. .... 'My child, give me thy heart.'

"Renunciation and acquiescence are less difficult to me than to others, for I wish nothing. I should wish only not to suffer, but Jesus at Gethsemane believed that he might offer the same prayer: let us join as he did these words, *Nevertheless not my will but Thine be done*, and let us wait." [1]

Such he was on the eve of his death. He was not any the less frank and grave all through his journal, notwithstanding its beauty, and the refinement of his language, shown in many places and grown to be habitual with him. In the course of the whole thirty years of his journal he feels what we are all so apt to forget, that we are all condemned to death and our execution is only postponed. And this is what causes this book to be so frank, serious, and useful.

1893.

[1] Vol. II., pp. 318, 319.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PEASANT STORIES OF S. T. SEMENOF

I HAVE long since made it a rule to judge every art production from three sides: first, from the side of the subject, how far important or necessary to men is that which is opened up newly by the artist, for every production is only so far a production of art as it discovers a new side of life; secondly, how far good and beautiful, corresponding to the subject, is the form of the production; and thirdly, how far is the artist's relation to his object genuine, in other words, how far does he believe in what he has produced.

This last always seems to me the most important to an art production. It gives the art production its strength, it makes the art production contagious — that is to say, it communicates to the spectator, the hearer, or the reader the feelings experienced by the artist.

In this respect Semenof is gifted to the highest degree.

There is a story by Flaubert, translated by Turgenief — "Julian." The last episode of the story, which ought to be the most touching, represents Julian lying on a bed together with a leper, and warming him with his body. This leper is Christ, who carries Julian with Him to heaven. The whole thing is described with great skill, but in reading this story I am always left perfectly cold and indifferent. I feel that the author would not have done and would not have cared to do what his hero did, and, therefore, I have no desire to do it, and I experience no emotion on reading of this marvelous exploit.

But here Semenof writes the simplest story, and it always affects me. A country lad comes to Moscow to find a place, and under the protection of a coachman from his own village, in service with a rich merchant,

obtains the situation as dvornik's assistant. This situation had been formerly held by an old man. The merchant, by the coachman's advice, dismisses the old man and takes the young lad in his place. The lad comes at night to begin his work, and from the courtyard hears the old man in the dvornik's room bewailing the fact that for no fault of his he had been dismissed, but only to give up his place to a younger man. The lad suddenly feels compassion for the old man, and his conscience pricks him for having caused him to lose his situation. He considers, hesitates, and, at last, decides to give up the work, agreeable and important as it was to him.

All this is told in such a way that every time I read this story I feel that the author not only would have wished to behave that way in such circumstances, but would have done so, and his feeling communicates itself to me, and I feel happy, and it seems to me that I myself have done some good deed or was ready to.

Sincerity is Semenof's merit. But, moreover, his subject-matter is always important. Important because it concerns itself with the most important class in Russia, — the peasantry, which Semenof knows, as only a peasant can know it, having himself lived their agricultural life in the country.

Still more important is the subject-matter of his stories, because in all of them the interest is not confined to external events or to eccentricities of existence, but to the way men approach or fall away from the ideal of Christian truth which is held firmly and distinctly in the author's soul, and serves him as a true criterion and measure of the worth and significance of men's actions.

The form of the stories perfectly corresponds to their subject-matter: it is dignified and simple, and the details are always true; there is not a false note. Especially beautiful, often quite original in its methods of expression, but always artless and strikingly strong and picturesque is the language in which the characters of the stories talk.

April 4, 1894.

INTRODUCTION TO A. STOCKHAM'S TOKOLOGY

THE book here presented does not belong among the vast throng of books of every kind, from those treating of philosophy and science to those treating of art and practical life, books which in differing words, in differing combinations and modifications, utter and reiterate the same familiar old commonplaces.

This book is one of those rare ones which treat, not of what every one is talking about and is necessary to no one, but of something which no one talks about, and is important and necessary to every one.

It is important for parents to know how to behave themselves so as, without excessive suffering, to bring into the world pure and healthy children and it is still more important for the prospective children themselves to be born under the best conditions, — as it says in one of the epigraphs of this book: *To be well born is the right of every child.*

This book is not one of those that are read merely so that no one may say, "I have not read it," but it is one of those the reading of which leaves something behind, compelling people to change their lives, to correct what was incorrect in them, or at least to think about it.

This book is entitled "Tokology," the science of the birth of children. There are all kinds of very strange sciences, but no such science as this; and yet, next to the science of how to live and how to die, this is the most important of sciences.

This book has had a great success in America, and has had a wide and important influence on American mothers and fathers. In Russia it ought to exert a still

greater influence, the question of refraining from tobacco and all kinds of stimulating beverages, beginning with alcohol and ending with tea, the questions of nutrition without taking the lives of animals, vegetarianism, the questions of sexual restraint in family life, and many others, some of them already settled, others still under discussion, and evoking an enormous literature in Europe and America, have with us scarcely, as yet, been touched upon; and therefore Dr. Stockham's book is especially important for us: it immediately transports the reader into a new world of vital human impulse.

In this book every thoughtful woman — it is especially designed for women — will find first and foremost that there is not the slightest necessity for her to continue living so blindly as old women and young girls have been living, but that she may and must find better ways of living, using for this purpose science, the experience of people, and her own free thought; and as a first example of such a method of treatment she will find in this book many precious counsels, and hints which will make life easier for herself, for her husband, and for her children.

February 14, 1890.

MODERN SCIENCE

INTRODUCTION TO A RUSSIAN TRANSLATION OF EDWARD CARPENTER'S ESSAY, "MODERN SCIENCE"

I THINK that Carpenter's essay on Modern Science[1] may be especially useful to our Russian society, where, more than in any other in Europe, is spread the superstitious belief that, for the good of humanity, it is not at all necessary to propagate true religious and moral knowledge, but only to study the experimental sciences, and that a knowledge of these sciences will satisfy all the spiritual demands of humanity.

It is obvious what a pernicious influence (similar to that of religious superstitions) such a crude superstition must have on the moral life of men, and therefore the dissemination of the thoughts of writers who critically examine the results and methods of the experimental sciences is especially desirable in our society.

Carpenter proves that neither astronomy, nor physics, nor chemistry, nor biology, nor sociology gives us a true knowledge of actual facts, but that all the "laws" discovered by these sciences are only generalizations, which have but an approximate value as laws, and that only owing to ignorance or disregard of other factors. Further, that even these laws appear to be laws to us only because we discover them in a domain so distant from us in time and space that we cannot perceive their want of correspondence with actual fact.

Besides this, Carpenter also points out that the method of science, consisting in the explanation of phenomena

[1] "Modern Science: A Criticism. Civilization, its Cause and Cure, and other Essays." By Edward Carpenter.

near and important to us by phenomena more distant from and indifferent to us, is a false method which can never lead to the desired results.

"Each science," he says, "has been (as far as possible) reduced to its lowest terms. Ethics has been made a question of utility and inherited experience. Political economy has been exhausted of all conceptions of justice between man and man, of charity, affection, and the instinct of solidarity; and has been founded on its lowest discoverable factor, namely, self-interest. Biology has been denuded of the force of personality in plants, animals, and men; the "self" here has been set aside, and the attempt made to reduce the science to a question of chemical and cellular affinities, protoplasm, and the laws of osmose. Chemical affinities, again, and all the wonderful phenomena of physics are emptied down into a flight of atoms; and the flight of atoms (and of astronomic orbs as well) is reduced to the laws of dynamics. ...."

It is supposed that to reduce higher questions to terms of lower ones will explain the higher. But this explanation is never attained, and what happened is that, descending lower and lower in its investigations, from the most essential questions to those less essential, science at last reaches a domain quite foreign to man, and only adjacent to him, to which domain it confines its attention, leaving without any solution all questions most important for man.

What occurs is something similar to what the result would be if a man, desiring to understand the nature of an object before him, should, instead of approaching it, examining it on all sides, and handling it, remove farther and farther from it, finally removing to such a distance that all details of color and unevenness of surface should disappear, and there remained only the outline which detached it from the horizon. And from such a distance the man might begin to describe this object in detail, imagining that he has now a clear understanding of it, and that this idea, conceived at such a distance, would contribute to a complete understanding of the

object. This self-delusion is partly exposed by Carpenter's criticism, which, in the first place points out that the knowledge science gives us in the sphere of natural science consists only of convenient modes of generalization, which by no means express actual facts; and secondly, that the method of science by which the phenomena of a higher order are reduced to the phenomena of a lower order, will never enable us to arrive at an explanation of the phenomena of the higher order.

But without settling beforehand the question whether the method of the experimental sciences can or cannot achieve a solution of the problems of life most important for humanity, the activity itself of the experimental sciences, considered in relation to the eternal and most legitimate demands of humanity, impresses one by its fallacy.

Men must live. And in order to live they must know how to live. All men always — well or ill — have learnt this, and in accordance with their knowledge, have lived and progressed. And this knowledge of how men should live has always, since the times of Moses, Solon, Confucius, been considered a science — the very science of sciences; and it is only in our time that it has begun to be considered that the science of how to live is not a science at all, but that true science is only experimental science, beginning with mathematics and ending with sociology.

And a strange misunderstanding ensues.

A simple and sensible working-man — according to the old sense and common sense as well — supposes that if there are men studying all their lives, and who think for him in return for being fed and provided for by him, then these men are probably engaged in studying what is needful for man, and he expects from science that it will solve for him those questions on which depend his welfare and that of all men. He expects that science will teach him how to live; how to act toward the members of his own family, his neighbors, and those of other countries; how to struggle with his passions;

in what he should and should not believe, and much besides. And what does our science reply?

It triumphantly announces how many millions of miles the sun is from the earth, with what rapidity light traverses space, how many millions of undulations of the ether a second are produced by light, and how many undulations of atmosphere by sound; it tells of the chemical composition of the Milky Way; it tells of a new element, helion, of micro-organisms and their excrements, of the points in the hand where electricity concentrates, of X-rays, and so on.

"But all this is not at all what I am in need of knowing," says the simple, sensible man. "I want to know how to live."

"I don't care what you are in need of knowing," replies science, "what you ask for refers to sociology. But before answering questions of sociology we must settle questions of zoölogy, botany, physiology — in short, biology. And in order to settle these questions it is first necessary to solve questions of physics, of chemistry; it is necessary also to agree as to the form of the infinitesimal atoms, and as to how it is that the ether with neither weight nor resistance transmits force."

And men, chiefly those who sit on the backs of others, and who can therefore conveniently wait, are satisfied by such answers, and continue sitting and yawning, awaiting what was promised. But the simple and sensible working-man, he on whose back the men studying science are sitting, the great mass of people, humanity at large, cannot be satisfied with such replies, and naturally ask in wonder, "But when will that be? We cannot wait. You yourselves say that you will find out all this after several generations. But we live, we are alive to-day and to-morrow we shall die, and therefore we must know how we are to live the life we are in now. Teach us, then."

"The stupid and ignorant man!" answers science; "he does not understand that what science serves is not utility but science. Science investigates that which is

subject to investigation, and cannot choose the objects of its study. Science studies everything. Such is the nature of science."

Men of science are indeed convinced that the characteristic of attending to trifles and neglecting things more substantial and important is not their own characteristic, but that of science. But the simple, sensible man begins to suspect that this characteristic belongs, not to science, but to those who are inclined to occupy themselves with trifles, attaching to these trifles great importance.

"Science studies everything," say the men of science. But there is too much of everything. Everything means an infinite quantity of objects, and it is impossible to study all at once. As a lantern cannot light up everything but only the place it is directed toward, so also science cannot investigate everything, but inevitably investigates only that to which its attention is directed. And as the lantern throws the strongest light on the place nearest to it, weaker and weaker light on more remote objects, and does not light up at all those objects which its light cannot reach; so also human science, of whatever kind, has always investigated and is investigating in most detail that which appears to the investigators to be most important, studying in less detail what appears to them less important, and not at all concerning itself with all the remaining infinite quantity of objects.

The standard which has defined and defines for men the very important, the less important, and the unimportant is men's general understanding of the sense and object of life, *i.e.* religion.

But our modern men of science, not acknowledging any religion, — and therefore possessing no basis upon which they might select objects for study according to the degree of their importance, separating the most important from the less important, and from that vast number of objects which will always remain uninvestigated because of the limitations of the human mind and their infinite quantity, — have invented for themselves a

theory of "science for science's sake," according to which science studies, not what is necessary to men, but everything.

Indeed, experimental science does study everything, only not in the sense of the totality of objects, but in the sense of disorder and chaos in the distribution of the investigated subjects, *i.e.* science does not most investigate what is most needed by men, less what is less needed, and not at all what is not needed, but investigates, haphazard, anything it comes across. Although there do exist classifications of the sciences by Comte and others, these classifications do not direct the choice of subjects for investigation, this being directed by human weaknesses inherent in men of science as in all men.

So that in reality experimental scientists do not, as they imagine and assert, study everything, but that which is more advantageous and easier for them to study. It is more advantageous to study what may contribute to the welfare of those higher classes to which the men occupied with science themselves belong, and it is easier to study things devoid of life. And this is what the investigators of experimental science do: they study books, monuments, and dead bodies, and this study they regard as the most real science.

So that what in our time is regarded as the true and only "science" (in the sense that the "Bible" was once called the only book worthy of the name) is not the investigation of how to make the life of men better and happier, but consists in collecting and copying out of many books into one what was written concerning a certain subject by former men, or in pouring liquids from one vial into another, in skilfully dissecting microscopic preparations, in cultivating bacteria, in cutting up frogs and dogs, in investigating the X-rays, the chemical composition of the stars, and so forth.

And all those sciences the object of which is to make human life better and happier — religious, moral, and social sciences — are not regarded as sciences by the reigning science, and are relegated to the theologians, philosophers, jurists, historians, and political economists, who

are occupied, under the pretense of scientific investigation, only in proving that the existing order of life, which puts them in an advantageous position, is precisely the one which should exist, and should, therefore, not only not be reformed, but be maintained by all means.

Not to speak of theology, philosophy, and jurisprudence, very noticeable in this respect is the most fashionable of this kind of science — political economy. The political economy most widely spread (that of Marx), acknowledging the existing order of life to be normal, not only does not now require of men the reformation of this order, *i.e.* does not point out how men should live in order that their condition might be improved, but, on the contrary, demands the continuation of the cruelty of the present state of things in order that the more than doubtful prophecies of what will happen if men continue to live as badly as they do at present, should be realized.

And, as always happens, the lower a human activity descends, the farther it recedes from what it should be, the more its self-assertion increases. This has happened with the science of our time. True science has never been appreciated by its contemporaries, but, on the contrary, has for the most part been persecuted. And it could not be otherwise. True science indicates to men their errors, and points to new, unusual ways of life, both of which services are obnoxious to the ruling part of society. Whereas the present science not only refrains from counteracting the tastes and demands of the ruling part of society, but completely coincides with them; it satisfies idle curiosity, astonishes people, and promises them increase of pleasure. And so, whereas all that is truly great is quiet, modest, imperceptible, the science of our time knows no limits to its self-glorification.

"All former methods were erroneous, and thus all that was formerly regarded as science is fraudulent, fallacious, frivolous. Our method is the only true one, ours the only true science. The progress of our science is such that thousands of years have not attained what

we have achieved in the last century. In the future, by following in the same path, our science will solve all questions, and give happiness to all humanity. Our science is the most important activity in the world, and we men of science the most important and necessary men on earth."

So think and say the men of science of our time, and yet, seen in its full significance, no science in any age or nation has stood on so low a plane as the present one. One part of it, that which should study the means of making human life good and happy, is occupied in justifying the existing bad order of life, and the other is absorbed with the solution of questions of idle curiosity.

"How idle curiosity?" I hear exclaimed by voices indignant at such blasphemy. "How about steam, electricity, telephones, and all our technical improvements? Not to speak of their scientific importance, observe the practical results they have achieved. Man has conquered nature, subjected its forces to himself".... and so on.

"But," replies the simple and sensible man, "all the practical results of man's victory over nature from long ago up to the present, are applied to manufactures injurious to the people; to means for exterminating men, to increasing luxury, dissoluteness; and therefore, man's victory over nature has not increased the welfare of men, but, on the contrary, made their condition worse."

If the organization of a society is bad, as ours is, where a small number of men dominate the majority and oppress them, then every victory over nature will inevitably only serve to increase this power and this oppression. And so it happens.

With a science taking as its subject, not the investigation of how people should live, but of what exists, and therefore occupied chiefly in investigating inanimate objects, and meanwhile leaving the organization of human society as it is, — with such science no improvements, no victories over nature, can improve the condition of men.

"And medical science? You forget its beneficial achievements. And inoculation with bacteria! And modern surgical operations!" generally exclaim the defenders of science, who, as their last resort, bring forward the successes of medicine in proof of the fruitfulness of all science.

"We can by inoculation prevent disease and cure it, we can perform painless operations, we can cut open and treat the vital organs of the body, we can straighten deformity," generally say the advocates of science, thinking somehow, that a child cured of diphtheria (one out of thousands of children who, in Russia, independently of diphtheria, average a death rate of 50 per cent and in foundling asylums 80 per cent) must convince people of the usefulness of science in general.

The order of our life is such that not only children, but the majority of adults, through bad food, heavy, injurious work, bad dwellings, bad clothes, and many hardships, do not live half so long as they should; it is such that children's diseases, syphilis, consumption, and alcoholism are getting a firmer and firmer hold of men, that a great part of the results of men's labor is taken from them for preparations for war, and that every ten or twenty years millions of men are exterminated by war. And all this occurs because science, instead of spreading amongst men correct religious, moral, and social ideas which would cause all these calamities to disappear of themselves, is occupied on the one hand with the justification of the existing order, and on the other hand with playthings. And in proof of the fruitfulness of science we are reminded that it cures one out of a thousand of those invalids who in reality become ill precisely because science does not fulfil its natural function.

If even a small portion of its efforts, of that attention and toil which science devotes to the trifles it is occupied with, had been directed toward the development amongst men of correct religious, moral, social, and even hygienic notions, there would not have occurred a hundredth part of those diphtherias, women's diseases,

and deformities upon the curing of which science so prides itself, effecting these cures in hospitals, the luxurious appointments of which cannot be accessible to all.

It is just as if men who had badly ploughed a field and badly sown it with bad seed should walk on this field and treat some broken ears of corn, meanwhile trampling on the rest; and should then exhibit this art of treating the broken ears as a proof of their knowledge of agriculture.

Our science, in order to become a science and to be really useful instead of harmful to humanity, must first of all renounce its experimental method, which causes it to consider as its business merely the study of what exists, and return to the only wise and fruitful understanding of science, according to which its subject is the investigation of how men must live. In this is the object and meaning of science, whereas, the investigation of what exists can be the subject of science only to the extent to which this investigation contributes to the knowledge of how men should live.

It is precisely this acknowledgment of the incompetency of experimental science and of the necessity of adopting another method that is expressed in Carpenter's essay.

1898.

THE FIRST STEP[1]

I

WHEN a man is working, not for show, but with the desire of accomplishing what he has undertaken, he inevitably shapes his actions into a certain order of succession, this order being determined by the nature of the work. If a man postpones to a later time that which, from the nature of the work, should be done first, or altogether omits some essential part, — he is certainly not working seriously, but is only making a pretense. This rule holds unalterably true, whether the work be material or not. As one cannot have any serious intention of baking bread, unless one first kneads the flour and then heats the oven, sweeps out the ashes, and so on, exactly in the same way one cannot seriously desire to lead a righteous life, without adopting a certain order of succession in the attainment of the necessary qualities.

This rule is especially important in connection with righteousness of life; for whereas in the case of material work, such for instance as making bread, it is easy to discover, by the result of his actions, whether a man is seriously engaged in work, or only pretending, in the case of leading a righteous life this verification is impossible. If people, without kneading the dough, or heating the oven, only pretend to make bread, — as on the stage, — then from the result, the absence of bread, it becomes evident that they were only pretending; but when a man pretends to be leading a righteous life, we have no such

[1] Written as a preface to a Russian translation of "The Ethics of Diet," by Howard Williams.

direct indications that he is not striving seriously, but is only making a pretense; for, not only are the results of a right life not always evident to those around, but very often they even appear to be pernicious. Respect for a man's activity and the acknowledgment of its utility and pleasantness for those around furnish no proof that his life is really good.

Therefore, for the distinguishing of a really good life from the mere appearance of one, this indication is especially valuable, namely, a regular order of succession in the acquirement of the qualities essential to a righteous life. And this indication is valuable, not so much for the discovery of the seriousness of other men's strivings after goodness, but for the testing of this sincerity in ourselves, as in this respect we are liable to deceive ourselves even more than others.

A correct order of succession in the attainment of virtues is an inevitable condition of advance toward a righteous life, consequently the teachers of mankind have always prescribed a certain invariable order for their attainment.

All moral teachings set up a ladder, as Chinese wisdom puts it, reaching from earth to heaven, the ascent of which can only be accomplished by starting from the lowest step. As in the teaching of the Brahmans, Buddhists, Confucians, so also in the teaching of the Greek sages, steps were fixed, and a higher step could not be attained without the lower one having been previously taken. All the moral teachers of mankind, religious and non-religious alike, have admitted the necessity of a definite order of succession in the attainment of the qualities essential to a righteous life. The necessity for this lies in the very essence of things, and therefore, it would seem, ought to be recognized by all.

But, strange to say, from the time Christianity spread widely, the consciousness of this necessary order appears to have been more and more lost, and is now retained only in the region of asceticism and monasticism. Secular Christians suppose and admit the possibility of the acquirement of the superior qualities of a righteous life,

not only in the absence of the lower virtues, which are a necessary condition of the higher ones, but even in the presence of the widest development of vices; in consequence of which there prevails in our time, among the majority of the men of the world, the greatest confusion as to what a right life is. The very conception of what constitutes a righteous life has been lost.

II

This, it seems to me, has come about in the following way.

When Christianity replaced heathenism it put forth moral demands superior to the heathen ones, and at the same time — as was also the case with pagan morality — it necessarily laid down one indispensable order for the attainment of virtues — certain steps in the attainment of a righteous life.

Plato's virtues, beginning with temperance,[1] advanced through manliness and wisdom to justice; the Christian virtues, commencing with self-renunciation, rise through devotion to the will of God to love.

Those who accepted Christianity seriously and strove to live righteous Christian lives, thus understood Christianity, and always began living rightly by a renunciation of their desires, which renunciation included the temperance of the pagans.

But let it not be supposed that Christianity in this matter was only echoing the teachings of paganism; let me not be accused of degrading Christianity from its lofty position to the level of heathenism. Such an accusation would be unjust, for I regard the Christian teaching as the highest the world has known, and as quite different from heathenism. The Christian teaching replaced the pagan one simply because it was different from and superior to it. But both Christian and pagan alike

[1] It is hardly necessary to point out that in this article temperance is used in its real meaning, and not with any exclusive reference to the drink question. — Tr.

lead men toward truth and goodness; and, as truth and goodness are always the same, the way to them must also be the same, and the *first steps* on this way must inevitably be the same for the Christian as for the heathen.

The difference between the Christian and pagan teaching of goodness lies in this: that the heathen teaching is one of final perfection, while the Christian teaching is one of infinite perfecting. Plato, for instance, makes justice the model of perfection, whereas Christ's model is the infinite perfecting of love. "*Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.*"

In this lies the difference. And hence the different relations of the pagan and Christian teachings toward different grades of virtue. According to the former the attainment of the highest virtue was possible, and each step toward this attainment had its comparative merit; the higher the step the greater the merit; so that from the pagan point of view men may be divided into moral and immoral — into more or less virtuous; whereas, according to the Christian teaching, which sets up the ideal of infinite perfection, this division is impossible. There can be neither higher nor lower grades — all steps are equal in relation to the infinite ideal.

Among the heathen the stage of virtue attained by a man constituted his merit; in Christianity merit consists only in the process of attainment, in the greater or lesser speed of attainment. From the heathen point of view a man who possessed the virtue of reasonableness stood morally higher than one deficient in that virtue; a man who in addition to reasonableness possessed manliness stood higher still; a man who to reasonableness and manliness added justice stood still higher. Whereas one Christian cannot be regarded as morally either higher or lower than another. A man is more or less of a Christian only in proportion to the speed with which he advances toward infinite perfection, irrespective of the stage he may have reached at a given moment. Hence the stationary righteousness of the Pharisee is lower than the advance of the repentant thief on the cross.

Such is the difference between the Christian and the heathen teachings. Consequently the stages of virtue, as for instance temperance and manliness, which in heathenism constitute merit, constitute none whatever in Christianity. In this respect the teachings differ. But with regard to the fact that there can be no advance toward virtue — toward perfection, independently of the lowest steps in virtue, as well in paganism as in Christianity — here there can be no difference.

The Christian (no less than the heathen) must commence the work of perfecting himself from the beginning, *i.e.* with the step at which the heathen begins it, namely temperance, just as a man who wishes to ascend a flight of stairs cannot avoid beginning with the first step. The only difference is that, for the pagan, temperance itself constitutes a virtue; whereas for the Christian, it is only a part of that self-abnegation which is itself but an indispensable condition of all aspiration after perfection. Therefore the manifestation of true Christianity could not but follow the same path as had been indicated and followed by heathenism.

But not all men have understood Christianity as an aspiration toward the perfection of the Heavenly Father. The majority of people have regarded it as a teaching about salvation, *i.e.* deliverance from sin, by means of grace transmitted among Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox through the Church, according to Protestants, the Reformed Church, and Calvinists, by means of faith in the redemption, and according to some by means of the two combined.

And precisely this teaching has destroyed the sincerity and seriousness of men's relation to the moral teaching of Christianity. However much the representatives of these faiths may preach about these means of salvation in hindering man in his aspiration after a righteous life, but, on the contrary, contributing toward it, — still out of certain propositions, there necessarily ensue certain conclusions; and no arguments can prevent men from arriving at these conclusions, when once they have accepted the statements from

which they result. If a man believe that he can be saved through grace given to him by the Church, or through the redemption, it is natural that he should think that his efforts to live a righteous life are unnecessary — the more so when he is told that even the hope that his efforts will make him better is a sin. Consequently a man who believes that there are means of salvation other than personal effort[1] cannot strive with the same energy and seriousness as the man who knows no other means. And not striving with perfect seriousness and knowing of other means besides personal effort, a man will inevitably neglect that unalterable order of succession for the attainment of the virtues necessary to a righteous life. And this has happened with the majority of those who profess Christianity.

III

The doctrine that personal effort is not necessary for the attainment by man of spiritual perfection, but that there are other means for its acquirement, is the cause of the relaxation of effort after a righteous life, and of the neglect of the consecutiveness indispensable to such a life.

The great mass of mankind, accepting Christianity only externally, took advantage of the substitution of Christianity for paganism to free themselves from the demands of the heathen virtues, — no longer necessary for a Christian, — and to free themselves from all conflict with their animal nature.

The same thing happens with those that cease to believe in the teaching of the Church. They are like the before-mentioned believers, only they put forward — instead of grace bestowed by the Church or through redemption — some imaginary good work, approved of by the majority of men, such as the service of science,

[1] As for instance by "indulgences" among the Roman Catholics. — Author's Note.

art, or humanity; — in the name of this imaginary good work they liberate themselves from the consecutive attainment of the qualities necessary for a right life, and are satisfied with pretending, like men on the stage, to be living a righteous life.

Those people that fell away from heathenism, without embracing Christianity in its true significance, began to preach love for God and man apart from self-renunciation and justice, and without temperance, *i.e.* to preach the higher virtues without the attainment of the lower ones, *i.e.* not the virtues themselves, but their semblance.

Some preach love to God and man without self-renunciation, and others humaneness, the service of humanity without temperance. And, as this teaching, while pretending to introduce him into higher moral regions, encourages the animal nature of man by liberating him from the most elementary demands of morality long ago laid down by the heathens, and not only not rejected, but strengthened, by true Christianity, it was readily accepted both by believers and unbelievers.

Only the other day the Pope's encyclical about socialism was published, in which, after a supposed refutation of the socialists' views as to the wrongfulness of private property, it was plainly stated that "certainly no one is obliged to help his neighbors by giving what he or his family needs, nor even to diminish anything of that which is required by him for decency. No one, indeed, need live contrary to custom."[1] "But after needful attention has been given to necessity and decency," continues the encyclical, "the duty of every one is to give the surplus to the poor."

Thus preaches the head of the most widely accepted Church of our time. Thus have preached all the Church teachers regarding salvation by works as insufficient. And, together with this teaching of selfishness, which prescribes that you shall give to your neighbors only that which you do not want yourself, they preach love and recall with pathos the celebrated words of Paul in the

[1] This passage is from St. Thomas: Nullus enim inconvenienter debet vivere.

thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, about love.

Notwithstanding that the Gospels overflow with demands for self-renunciation, with indications that self-renunciation is the first condition of Christian perfection, notwithstanding such clear expressions as: "Whosoever will not take up his cross,...." "Whosoever hath not forsaken father, mother,...." "Whosoever shall lose his life...." people assure themselves, and others, that it is possible to love men without renouncing, not only that to which one is accustomed, but also what one regards as decent for oneself.

So say the Church people, and those who reject not only the Church but also the Christian teaching — free-thinkers — think, speak, write, and act in an exactly similar manner. These men assure themselves, and others, that, without in the least diminishing their needs, without overcoming their desires, they can serve mankind, *i.e.* lead a righteous life.

Men have thrown aside the heathen consecutiveness of virtues, and without accepting the Christian teaching in its true significance, and, not having accepted the Christian order of succession, they remain without any guidance.

IV

In olden times, when there was no Christian teaching, all the teachers of life, beginning with Socrates, regarded as the first virtue of life, temperance — *ἐγκράτεια* or *σωφροσύνη*; and it was understood that every virtue must begin with and pass through this one. It was clear that a man who had no self-command, who had developed an immense number of desires, and had yielded himself up to them, could not lead a righteous life. It was evident that, before a man could even think of disinterestedness, justice, — to say nothing of generosity or love — he must learn to exercise control over himself. Now, according to our ideas, nothing of this

sort is necessary. We are convinced that a man whose desires are developed to the highest degree attained in our society, a man who cannot live without satisfying a hundred unnecessary habits which have taken possession of him, can lead an altogether moral and righteous life. Looked at from any point of view, — the lowest, utilitarian, the higher, pagan, which demands justice, or especially from the highest, the Christian, which demands love, — it should surely be clear to every one that a man who uses for his own pleasure (with which he might easily dispense) the labor, often the painful labor, of others behaves badly, and that this is the very first wrong action he must cease to commit, if he wishes to live a good life.

From the utilitarian point of view such conduct is bad because, while forcing others to work for him, a man is always in an unstable position; he accustoms himself to the satisfaction of his desires and becomes their slave, while those who work for him do so with hatred and envy, and only await an opportunity to free themselves from the necessity of so working. Consequently such a man is always in danger of being left with deeply rooted habits, which he is unable to satisfy.

From the point of view of justice, such conduct is bad, because it is not well to employ for one's own pleasure the labor of other men, who cannot themselves afford a hundredth part of the pleasures enjoyed by him for whom they labor.

From the point of view of Christian love, it can hardly be necessary to prove that a man who loves others will give them his own labor rather than take from them for his own pleasure the fruit of their labor.

But these demands of utility, justice, and love are altogether ignored by the society of our day. With us the tendency to limit one's desires is regarded as neither the first, nor even the last, but as an altogether unnecessary, condition of a righteous life.

According to the prevailing and most widely spread teaching of life to-day, the augmentation of one's wants

is, on the contrary, regarded as a desirable condition, as a sign of development, civilization, culture, and perfection. So-called educated people regard habits of comfort, *i.e.* of effeminacy, as not only harmless, but even good, indicating a certain moral elevation, — almost a virtue.

It is thought that the more the wants, and the more refined these wants, the better.

Nothing corroborates this statement better than the descriptive poetry, and especially the novels of the last two centuries.

How are the heroes and heroines who represent the ideals of virtue portrayed?

In most cases the men who are meant to represent something noble and lofty — from Childe Harold down to the latest heroes of Feuillet, Trollope, De Maupassant — are nothing else than depraved sluggards, consuming in luxury the labor of thousands, and themselves doing nothing useful for anybody. The heroines, their mistresses, who in one way or another afford more or less delight to these men, are equally idle, also devouring by their luxury the labor of others.

I do not refer to those representations of really abstinent and industrious people with which one occasionally meets in literature; I am speaking of the usual type, representing an ideal to the masses of the person whom the majority of men and women are trying to resemble. I remember the difficulty (inexplicable to me at the time) that I experienced when I wrote novels, and with which I contended, and with which I know all now contend who have even the dimmest conception of what constitutes real moral beauty, — the difficulty of portraying a type taken from the upper classes, ideally good and kind, and at the same time true to life.

A description of a man or woman of the upper classes would be true to life only if it represented him in his usual surroundings, *i.e.* in luxury, physical idleness, and demanding much. From a moral point of view such a person is undoubtedly objectionable. But it is necessary to represent this person in such a way that he may ap-

pear attractive. And novelists try so to represent him. I also tried. And, strange to say! such a representation, *i.e.* of a fornicator, a murderer (duellist or soldier), an utterly useless, idly moving about, fashionable buffoon, who appears attractive, does not require much art or effort. The readers of novels are, for the most part, exactly such men, and therefore readily believe that these Childe Harolds, Onyegins,[1] Messieurs de Camors, and the like, are very excellent people.

V

The fact that the men of our time do not admit heathen abstinence and Christian self-renunciation to be good and desirable qualities, but, on the contrary, regard the augmentation of wants as good and elevated, is clearly proved by the education given to the vast majority of children in our society. Instead of accustoming them to temperance, like heathens, or to the self-renunciation proper to Christians, they are deliberately inoculated with habits of effeminacy, physical idleness, and luxury.

I have long wished to write a fairy tale of this kind: A woman, wishing to avenge herself on one who has insulted her, carries off her enemy's child, and, going to a sorcerer, asks him to teach her how she can most cruelly avenge herself on the stolen infant. The sorcerer bids her carry the child to a place which he indicates, and assures her that a most terrible vengeance will be the result. The incensed woman follows his advice, but, keeping her eye upon the child, is astonished to find that it is found and adopted by a wealthy, childless man. She goes to the sorcerer and reproaches him, but he bids her wait. The child grows up in luxury and effeminacy. The woman is perplexed, but again the sorcerer bids her wait. And at length the time comes when the wicked woman is not only satisfied, but even feels compassion for her victim. He grows up in the

[1] The hero of a Russian poem by Pushkin. — Tr.

effeminacy and dissoluteness of wealth, and, thanks to his good nature, is ruined.

Then begins a series of physical sufferings, poverty and humiliation to which he is especially sensitive, and with which he knows not how to contend. He has aspirations toward a moral life, — but his flesh is weak; he has grown effeminate by being accustomed to luxury and idleness; he struggles in vain; he falls lower and ever lower; he indulges in drunkenness to drown thought, then comes crime or insanity or suicide.

And indeed one cannot regard without horror the education of the children of the wealthy class in our day. Only the cruelest foe would, one would think, inoculate a child with those defects and vices which are now instilled into him by his parents, especially by mothers. One is horror-struck at the sight, and still more at the results of this, if only one knows how to discern what is taking place in the souls of the best of these children, so carefully ruined by their parents.

Young creatures are inoculated with habits of effeminacy at a time when they do not yet understand their moral significance.

Not only is the habit of temperance and self-control neglected, but, contrary to the educational practice of Sparta and the ancient world in general, this quality is altogether atrophied. Not only do men grow up unaccustomed to work, and devoid of the qualities essential to all labor, — concentration of mind, strenuousness, firmness, enthusiasm for the work, ability to repair what is spoiled, familiarity with fatigue, joy in attainment, — but they are habituated to idleness, and to contempt for all the products of labor, are taught to spoil, throw away, and again procure for money anything they fancy, without a thought as to how things are made. Men are bereft of the power of acquiring the virtue, — first in order of consecutiveness, and indispensable for the attainment of all the others, — reasonableness, and are let loose in a world where the lofty virtues of justice, the service of man, and love are preached, and apparently esteemed.

It is well if the youth be endowed with a morally feeble and obtuse nature, which does not detect the difference between make-believe and genuine righteousness of life, and is satisfied with the prevailing mutual deception. If this be the case, all goes apparently well, and such a man will sometimes quietly live on, with his moral consciousness unawakened, till death.

But it is not always thus, especially of late, now that the consciousness of the immorality of such a life fills the air, and penetrates the heart unsought. Frequently, and ever more frequently, it happens that there awakens a demand for real, unfeigned morality; and then begin the inner painful struggle and sufferings, which end but rarely in the triumph of the moral sentiment.

A man feels that his life is bad, that he must reform it from the very beginning, and he tries to do so; but here he is attacked on all sides by those that have passed through a similar struggle and been vanquished. They endeavor by every means to convince him that this reform is quite unnecessary, that goodness does not at all depend upon temperance and self-renunciation, that it is possible for a man, while addicting himself to gluttony, personal adornment, physical idleness, fornication even, to be perfectly good and useful. And the struggle, in most cases, terminates lamentably. The man, either overcome by his weakness, yields to the general opinion, stifles the voice of conscience, distorts his reason to justify himself, and continues to lead the same dissipated life, assuring himself that it is redeemed by faith in the redemption or the sacraments, or by the service of science, the state, or of art; or else he struggles, suffers, and finally becomes insane, or shoots himself.

It seldom happens that, amid all the temptations that surround him, a man of our society understands what has been for thousands of years, and still is, an elementary truth for all reasonable people, namely, that for the attainment of a good life it is necessary, in the first place, to cease to live an evil life; and for the attainment of the higher virtues it is needful, first of all, to acquire the virtue of temperance or self-control, as the heathens

called it, or of self-renunciation, as Christianity has it, and gradually, by strenuous efforts, succeeds in attaining this primary virtue.

VI

I HAVE just been reading some letters, written between 1840 and 1850 by a highly educated, advanced man, the exile Ogaref, to another still more highly educated and clever man, Herzen. In these letters Ogaref gives expression to his sincere thoughts and highest aspirations, and one cannot fail to see that — as was natural to a young man — he somewhat shows off before his friend. He talks of self-perfecting, of sacred friendship, love, the service of science, of humanity, and the like. And at the same time he calmly writes that he often irritates the companion of his life by, as he expresses it, "returning home in an unsober state, or disappearing for long hours with a fallen, but dear creature. ...."

Evidently it never even occurred to this remarkably kind-hearted, talented, and educated man that there was anything in the least objectionable in the fact that he, a married man, awaiting the confinement of his wife (in his next letter he writes that his wife has given birth to a child), returned home intoxicated, and disappears with dissolute women. It did not enter his head that until he had commenced the struggle, and had, at least to some extent, conquered his inclination to drunkenness and fornication, he could not think of friendship and love, and still less of serving any one or anything. But he not only did not struggle against these vices, he evidently thought there was something very nice in them, and that they did not in the least hinder aspiration after perfection; and, therefore, instead of hiding them from the friend in whose eyes he wishes to appear in a good light, he exhibits them.

Thus it was half a century ago. I was contemporary with such men. I knew Ogaref and Herzen themselves, and others of that stamp, and men educated in

the same traditions. There was a remarkable absence of consistency in the lives of all these men. Together with a sincere and ardent desire for good, there was an utter looseness of personal desire, which, they thought, could not hinder the living of a good life, nor the performance of good, and even great, deeds. They put unkneaded loaves into a cold oven, and believed that bread would be baked. And then, when, with advancing years, they began to remark that the bread did not bake, *i.e.* that no good came of their lives, they saw in this something peculiarly tragic.

And the tragedy of such lives is indeed terrible. And this same tragedy that appeared in the lives of Herzen, Ogaref, and others of their time, exists to-day in those of very many so-called educated people, who hold the same views. A man desires to lead a good life, but that consecutiveness which is indispensable for this is lost in the society in which he lives. As, fifty years ago, Ogaref, Herzen, and others, so also the majority of men of the present day are persuaded that to lead an effeminate life, to eat sweet and fat dishes, delighting oneself in every way and satisfying all one's desires, does not hinder one from living a good life. But as it is evident that a righteous life in their case does not result, they give themselves up to pessimism, and say, "Such is the tragical fate of man."

What is also strange about the case is that these people know that the distribution of pleasures among men is unequal, and they regard this inequality as an evil and wish to correct it, and yet they do not cease to strive toward the augmentation of their pleasures, *i.e.* toward the augmentation of the inequality of the distribution of pleasures. In acting thus, these people are like men who, having entered before others into an orchard, hasten to gather all the fruit they can lay their hands on; and yet would like to organize a more equal distribution of the fruit of the orchard between themselves and the late-comers, while they continue to pluck all the fruit they come across.

VII

The delusion that men, while addicting themselves to their desires and regarding this life of desire as good, can nevertheless lead a good, useful, just, and loving life, is so astonishing that men of later generations will, I should think, simply fail to understand what the men of our time meant by the words "good life," when they said that the gluttons, the effeminate, lustful sluggards of our wealthy classes led good lives. Indeed, one need only put aside, for a time, the customary view of the life of our wealthy classes, and look at it, — I do not say from the Christian point of view, but from the heathen standpoint of common justice, in order to be convinced that, living amidst the violation of the plainest laws of justice or fairness, such as even children in their games think it wrong to violate, we, men of the wealthy classes, have no right even to talk about a good life.

Any man of our society who would, — I do not say begin a good life, but even begin to make some little approach toward it, must first of all cease to lead a bad life, must begin to destroy those conditions of an evil life with which he finds himself surrounded.

How often one hears, as an excuse for not reforming our lives, the argument, that any act which is contrary to the usual mode of life would be unnatural, ludicrous, — would look like a desire to show off and would therefore not be a good action. This argument seems framed expressly to prevent people from ever changing their evil lives. If all our life were good, just, kind, then and only then would an action in conformity with the usual mode of life be good. If one half of our life were good and the other half bad, then there would be as much chance of an action out of conformity with the usual mode of life being good as of its being bad. But when life is altogether bad, and irregular, as is the case in our upper classes, then a man cannot perform one good action without disturb-

ing the usual current of life. He can do a bad action without disturbing this current, but not a good one.

A man accustomed to the life of our well-to-do classes cannot lead a righteous life without first coming out of those conditions of evil in which he is immersed, — he cannot begin to do good until he has ceased to do evil. It is impossible for a man living in luxury to lead a righteous life. All his efforts after goodness will be in vain, until he changes his life, until he performs that work which stands before him first in sequence. A good life according to the heathen view, and still more according to the Christian one, is measured solely, nor can it be measured in any other way, by the mathematical relation of love for self, and love for others. The less there is of love for self, with all the ensuing care about self and the selfish demands made upon the labor of others, and the more there is of love for others, with the resultant care for and labor bestowed upon others, the better is the life.

Thus has righteousness of life been understood by all the sages of the world and all true Christians, and in exactly the same way do all men understand it now. The more a man gives to others and the less he demands for himself, the better he is; the less he gives to others and the more he demands for himself, the worse he is.

If we move the fulcrum of a lever from the long end to the short one, this will not only elongate the long arm, but will also reduce the short one. So also if a man, possessing a certain faculty, love, augment his love and care for himself, he will thereby diminish his power of loving and caring for others, not only in proportion to the love he has transferred to himself, but in a much greater degree. Instead of feeding others a man eats too much himself; by so doing he not only diminishes the possibility of giving away the surplus, but, by overeating, he deprives himself of power to help others.

In order to love others in reality and not in word only, one must cease to love oneself also in reality and not in word. In most cases it happens thus: we think we love

others, we assure ourselves and others that it is so, but we love them only in words, while ourselves we love in reality. Others we forget to feed and put to bed, ourselves — never. Therefore, in order really to love others in deed, we must learn not to love ourselves in deed, learn to forget to feed ourselves and put ourselves to bed, exactly as we forget to do these things for others.

We say of an effeminate person, accustomed to lead a luxurious life, that he is a "good man" and "leads a good life." But such a person, — whether man or woman, — although he may possess the most amiable traits of character, meekness, good-nature, etc., cannot lead a good life, any more than a knife of the very best workmanship and steel can be sharp and cut well, without the process of sharpening, *i.e.* preparation. To be good and lead a good life means to give to others more than one takes from them. Whereas an effeminate man, accustomed to a luxurious life, cannot do this, first because he himself is always in want of much (and this, not on account of his selfishness, but because he is accustomed to luxury, and it is painful for him to be deprived of that to which he is accustomed); and secondly, because by consuming all that he receives from others he weakens himself and renders himself unfit to labor, and therefore unfit to serve others. An effeminate man who sleeps long upon a soft bed, eats and drinks abundance of fat, sweet food, is always dressed cleanly and suitably to the temperature, who has never accustomed himself to the effort of laborious work, can do very little.

We are so accustomed to our own lies and the lies of others, and it is so advantageous for us not to see through the lies of others, in order that they may not see through ours, that we are not in the least astonished at, and do not doubt the truth of, the assertion of the virtuousness, sometimes even the sanctity, of people who are leading a perfectly loose life.

A person, man or woman, sleeps on a spring bed with two mattresses, and two smooth, clean sheets, and feather pillows in pillow cases. At the bedside is a rug, that the feet may not get cold on stepping out of bed, notwith-

standing that slippers also lie by the bedside. Here also are to be found the necessary utensils so that he need not leave the house, — whatever uncleanliness he may produce will all be carried away and made tidy. The windows are covered with curtains, that the daylight may not awaken him, and he sleeps as long as he is inclined. Besides all this, measures are taken that the room may be warm in winter and cool in summer, and that he may not be disturbed by the noise of flies or other insects. While he sleeps, water, hot and cold, for his ablutions, sometimes baths and preparations for shaving, are provided. Tea and coffee are also prepared, stimulating drinks to be taken immediately upon rising. Boots, shoes, galoshes, several pairs soiled the previous day, are already being cleaned and made to shine like glass, freed from every speck of dust. Similarly are cleaned various garments, soiled on the preceding day, differing in texture, to suit not only summer and winter, but also spring, autumn, rainy, damp, and warm weather. Clean linen, washed, starched, and ironed, is being made ready with studs, shirt buttons, buttonholes, all carefully inspected by specially appointed people.

If the person be active he rises early — at seven o'clock, *i.e.* still two or three hours later than those who are making all these preparations for him. Besides preparing clothes for the day and covering for the night, there is also a costume and foot-gear for the time of dressing: dressing-gown and slippers. So he undertakes his washing, cleaning, brushing, for which several kinds of brushes are used, as well as soap and a great quantity of water. (Many English men and women for some reason or other are specially proud of using a great deal of soap and pouring a large quantity of water over themselves.) Then he dresses, brushes his hair before a special kind of looking-glass (different from those that hang in almost every room in the house), takes the things he needs, such as spectacles or eye-glasses, and then distributes, in different pockets, a clean pocket-handkerchief, a watch with a chain, though in almost every room he goes to there will be a clock, money of various

kinds, small change, often in a specially contrived case, which saves him the trouble of looking for the required coin, and bank-notes; also visiting cards on which is printed his name, saving him the trouble of saying or writing it, pocket-book, and pencil. In the case of women, the toilet is still more complicated: corsets, arranging of long hair, adornments, laces, elastics, ribbons, ties, hairpins, pins, brooches.

But at last all is complete and the day commences, generally with eating; tea and coffee are drunk with a great quantity of sugar, bread made of the finest white flour is eaten with large quantities of butter and sometimes the flesh of pigs. The men for the most part smoke cigars or cigarettes at this time, and read the newly arrived papers. Then they leave the house for their office or business, or drive in carriages, produced specially to move such people about. Then comes a luncheon of slain beasts, birds, and fish, followed by a dinner consisting, if it be very modest, of three courses, dessert, and coffee. Then playing at cards and playing music, — or the theater, reading, and conversation, in soft spring arm-chairs, by the light of intensified and shaded light of candles, gas, or electricity. After this tea, again eating supper, and again to bed, — shaken up and prepared with clean linen, and washed utensils to be again made foul.

Thus pass the days of a man of modest life, of whom, if he be good-natured and do not possess any habits specially obnoxious to those about him, it is said that he leads a good life.

But a good life is the life of a man who does good to others; and can a man accustomed to live thus do good to others? Before he can do good to men he must cease to do evil. Reckon up all the harm such a man, often unconsciously, does to others, and you will see that he is far indeed from doing good; he would have to perform many acts of heroism in order to redeem the evil he commits, whereas he is too much enfeebled by his life full of desires to perform any such acts. He might sleep with more advantage,

both physical and moral, lying on the floor, wrapped in his cloak, as Marcus Aurelius did; and thus he might save all the labor and trouble involved in the manufacture of mattresses, springs, and pillows, as also the daily labor of the laundress, — one of the weaker sex burdened by the bearing and nursing of children, — who washes linen for this strong man. By going to bed earlier and getting up earlier he might save window-curtains and the evening lamp. He might sleep in the same shirt he wears during the day, might step barefooted upon the floor, and go out into the yard; he might wash at the well, — in a word, he might live like those who work for him, and might thus save all this work that is done for him. He might save all the labor expended upon his clothing, his refined food, his recreations. And he knows under what conditions all these labors are performed: how in performing them men perish, suffer, and often hate those that take advantage of their poverty to force them to do it.

How then is such a man to do good to others, and to lead a righteous life, without abandoning this effeminate, luxurious life?

But we need not speak of how other people appear in our eyes, — every one must see and feel this with regard to himself.

I cannot but repeat this same thing again and again, notwithstanding the cold and hostile silence with which my words are received. A moral man, living a life of comfort, a man even of the middle class (I will not speak of the upper classes, who daily consume, to satisfy their caprices, the results of hundreds of working days), cannot live quietly, knowing that all that he is using is produced by the labor and crushed lives of the working-people, who are dying without hope, ignorant, drunken, dissolute, half savage creatures, employed in mines, factories, and at agricultural labor, producing the articles that he uses.

At the present moment I, who am writing this, and you who will read it, whoever you may be, both you and I have

wholesome, sufficient, perhaps abundant, luxurious food, pure, warm air to breathe, winter and summer clothing, various recreations, and, most important of all, we have leisure by day and undisturbed repose at night. And here, by our side, live the working-people, who have neither wholesome food, nor healthful lodgings, nor sufficient clothing, nor recreations, and who, above all, are deprived not only of leisure, but even of rest: old men, children, women, worn out by labor, by sleepless nights, by disease, who spend their whole lives providing for us those articles of comfort and luxury which they do not possess, and which are for us not necessities, but superfluities. Therefore, a moral man, I do not say a Christian, but simply a man professing humane views or merely justice, cannot but wish to change his life and cease to use articles of luxury produced under such conditions.

If a man really pities those that manufacture tobacco, then the first thing he will naturally do will be to cease smoking, because by continuing to smoke and buy tobacco he encourages the preparation of tobacco by which men's health is destroyed. And so with every other article of luxury. If a man can still continue to eat bread even under the present conditions of labor and hard work by which it is produced, this is owing to his inability to deny himself what is indispensable. But with regard to things which are not only unnecessary, but even superfluous, there can be no other conclusion than this, that if I pity men engaged in the manufacture of certain articles, then I shall in no wise accustom myself to require such articles.

But in these days men argue otherwise. They invent the most various and intricate arguments, but never say what naturally occurs to every plain man. According to them it is not at all necessary to abstain from luxuries. One can sympathize with the condition of the working-men, deliver speeches and write books in their behalf, and at the same time continue to profit by the labor that one deems ruinous to them.

According to one argument it appears that I may

profit by the ruinous labors of the working-men, because, if I do not, another will. Something like the argument that I must drink wine that is injurious to me, because it has been bought, and, if I do not drink it, others will do so.

According to another argument, it is even beneficial to the working-men to employ their labors in producing luxuries, as in this way we provide them with money, *i.e.* the means of subsistence; as if we could not provide them with the means of subsistence in any other way than by making them produce articles injurious to them and superfluous to us.

But according to the argument now most widely spread, it appears that, since there is such a thing as division of labor, any work upon which a man is engaged, whether he be a government official, priest, landowner, manufacturer, or merchant, is so useful that it fully compensates for the labor of the working-classes by which he profits. One serves the State, another the Church, a third science, a fourth art, and a fifth serves those who serve the State, science, and art; and all are firmly convinced that what they give to mankind certainly compensates for all they take. And it is astonishing how, while continually augmenting their luxurious requirements without increasing their activity, these people continue to be certain that their activity compensates for all that they consume.

Whereas, if you listen to these people's judgment of one another, it appears that each individual is far from being worth what he consumes. Government officials say that the work of the landlords is not worth what they spend, landlords say the same about merchants, and merchants about government officials, and so on. But this does not disconcert them, and they continue to assure men that they, each of them, profit by the labor of others exactly in proportion as they give to others. So that the payment is not determined by the work, but the value of the imaginary work is determined by the payment. So do they assure each other, but they know perfectly well in the depth of their soul that all their

arguments do not justify them, that they are not at all required by the working-men, and that they profit by the labor of these men, not on account of any division of labor, but simply because they have the power to do so, and because they are so perverted that they cannot dispense with this labor.

And all this arises from people imagining that it is possible to lead a good life, without first acquiring the first quality which is necessary for a righteous life.

And this first quality is temperance.

VIII

There never has been, and cannot be, a righteous life without temperance. Apart from temperance no righteous life is imaginable. The attainment of righteousness must commence with it.

There is a scale of virtues, and it is necessary, if one would mount the higher steps, to begin with the lowest; and the first virtue a man must acquire, if he wishes to acquire the others, is that which the ancients called *ἐγκράτεια* or *σωφροσύνη*, *i.e.* reasonableness or self-control.

If in the Christian teaching temperance was included in the conception of self-renunciation, still the order of succession remains the same, and the acquirement of no Christian virtue is possible without temperance, — and this not because such a rule has been invented by any one, but because such is the essential nature of the matter.

But even temperance, the first step in every righteous life, is not attainable all at once, but only by degrees.

Temperance is the liberation of man from desires, — their subordination to reasonableness, *σωφροσύνη*. But a man's desires are many and various, and in order successfully to contend with them he must begin with the fundamental ones, — those upon which the more complicated ones have grown up, and not with those complex lusts which have grown up upon the fundamental ones.

There are complex lusts, like that of the adornment of the body, sports, amusements, idle talk, inquisitiveness, and many others; and there are also fundamental desires, gluttony, idleness, sexual love. And one must begin to contend with these lusts from the beginning, not with the complex, but with the fundamental ones, and that also in a definite order. And this order is determined both by the nature of things, and also by the tradition of human wisdom.

A man who eats too much cannot strive against laziness, while a gluttonous and idle man will never be able to contend with sexual lust. Therefore, according to all the moral teachings, the effort toward temperance commences with a struggle against the lust of gluttony, — commences with fasting. In our time, however, every serious relation to the attainment of a good life has been so long and so completely lost, that not only is the very first virtue, — temperance, — without which the others are unattainable, regarded as superfluous, but the order of succession necessary for the attainment of this first virtue is also disregarded, and fasting is quite forgotten, or is looked upon as a silly superstition, and utterly unnecessary.

And yet, just as the first condition of a good life is temperance, so the first condition of a life of temperance is fasting.

One can wish to be good, one can dream of goodness, without fasting; but to *be* good without fasting is as impossible as it is to advance without getting up on to one's feet.

Fasting is an indispensable condition of a good life, whereas gluttony is, and always has been, the first sign of the opposite, a bad life; and unfortunately this vice is in the highest degree characteristic of the life of the majority of the men of our time.

Look at the faces and figures of the men of our circle and day, — on many of those faces with their pendent cheeks and double chins, those corpulent limbs and prominent abdomens, lies the indelible seal of a dissolute life. Nor can it be otherwise. Consider our life,

the actuating motive of the majority of the men of our society; ask yourself what is the chief interest of this majority? And, however strange it may appear to us who are accustomed to hide our real interests and profess false, artificial ones, you will see that the chief interest of their life is the satisfaction of the palate, — the pleasure of eating, gluttony. From the poorest to the richest, eating is, I think, the chief aim, — the chief pleasure of our life.

Poor working-people form an exception only inasmuch as want prevents their addicting themselves to this passion. No sooner have they the time and means than, in imitation of the higher classes, they procure what is sweetest and most delectable, and eat and drink as much as they can. The more they eat the more do they deem themselves, not only happy, but also strong and healthy. And in this conviction they are encouraged by the upper classes, who regard food in precisely the same way. The educated classes imagine that happiness and health (as medical men assure them, stating that the most expensive food, meat, is the most wholesome) consist in devouring savory, nourishing, easily digested food, though they try to conceal this.

Look at rich people's lives, listen to their conversation. What lofty subjects seem to occupy them: philosophy, science, art, poetry, the distribution of wealth, the welfare of the people, and the education of the young; but all this is, for the immense majority, a sham; all this occupies them in the intervals of business, real business, between luncheon and dinner, while the stomach is full, and it is impossible to eat more. The only real, living interest of the majority of both men and women is eating, especially after early youth. How to eat, what to eat, where, when?

No solemnity, no rejoicing, no consecration, no opening of anything can dispense with eating. Look at people traveling. In their case it is especially evident. "Museums, libraries, parliament — how very interesting! But where shall we dine? Who provides the best food?" Look at people when they come together

for dinner, dressed up, perfumed, around a table decorated with flowers, how joyfully they rub their hands and smile.

If we could look into the hearts of the majority of people, what should we find they most desire? Appetite for breakfast, for dinner. What is the severest punishment from infancy upward? To be put on bread and water. What artisans get the highest wages? Cooks. What is the chief interest of the mistress of the house? To what subject does the conversation of middle-class housewives generally tend? And if the conversation of the members of the higher classes does not tend in the same direction, it is not because they are better educated or are occupied with higher interests, but simply because they have a housekeeper or a butler who relieves them of all anxiety about their dinner.

But once deprive them of this convenience, and you will see what causes them most anxiety. It all comes round to the subject of eating, the price of grouse, the best way of making coffee, of baking sweet cakes, etc. Men come together, whatever the occasion, — a christening, a funeral, a wedding, the consecration of a church, the departure or arrival of a friend, the consecration of regimental colors, the celebration of a memorable day, the death or birth of a great scientist, philosopher, teacher of morality, — men come together as if occupied by the most lofty interests. So they say; but it is only a pretense: they all know that there will be eating — good, savory food — and drinking, and it is chiefly this that brings them together.

For several days before animals have been slaughtered, baskets of provisions brought from gastronomic shops; cooks and their helpers, kitchen boys and maids, specially attired in clean, starched frocks and caps, have been "at work." "Chefs," receiving $250 a month and more, have been occupied in giving instructions. Cooks have been chopping, kneading, roasting, arranging, adorning. With like solemnity and importance a master of the ceremonies has been working, calculating, pondering, adjusting with his eye, like an artist. A gardener

has been employed upon the flowers. Scullery maids .... An army of men has been at work, the result of thousands of working days are being swallowed up, and all this that people may come together to talk about some great teacher of science or morality, or to recall the memory of a deceased friend, or to greet a young couple just entering upon a new life.

In the middle and lower classes it is perfectly evident that every festivity, every funeral or wedding, means gluttony. There the matter is so understood. To such an extent is gluttony the motive of the assembly that in Greek and in French the same word means both "wedding" and "feast." But in the upper classes, among the refined who have long possessed wealth, great skill is used to conceal this and to make it appear that eating is a secondary matter, necessary only for appearance. And this pretense is easy, as in the majority of cases the guests are satiated in the true sense of the word, — they are never hungry.

They pretend that dinner, eating, is not necessary to them, is even a burden; but this is a lie. Try giving them, instead of the refined dishes they expect, I do not say bread and water, but porridge or gruel or something of that kind, and see what a storm it will call forth, and how evident will become the real truth, namely, that the chief interest of the assembly is, not the ostensible one, but — gluttony.

Look at what men sell; go through a town and see what men buy: — articles of adornment and things to devour. And indeed this must be so, it cannot be otherwise. It is possible not to think about eating, — to keep this lust under control only when a man does not eat except in obedience to necessity; but if a man *ceases* to eat only in obedience to necessity, *i.e.* when the stomach is full, then all this cannot be otherwise. If men love the pleasure of eating, if they allow themselves to love this pleasure, if they find it good (as is the case with the vast majority of men in our time, and with educated men quite as much as uneducated, although they pretend that it is not so), then there is no

limit to the augmentation of this pleasure, no limit beyond which it may not grow. The satisfaction of a need has limits, but pleasure has none. For the satisfaction of our needs, it is necessary and sufficient to eat bread, porridge, or rice; for the augmentation of pleasure there is no end to the flavorings and seasonings.

Bread is a necessary and sufficient food. (This is proved by the millions of men who are strong, active, healthy, and hard-working, on rye-bread alone.) But it is pleasanter to eat bread with some flavoring. It is well to soak the bread in water boiled with meat. Still better to put into this water some vegetable, or better yet, several vegetables. It is well to eat meat. And meat is better not stewed, but only roasted. And better still with butter, and underdone, and then only certain parts of the meat. And add to this vegetables and mustard. And drink wine with it, red wine for preference. One does not need any more, but one can eat some fish, if it is well flavored with sauces, and swallowed down with white wine. It would seem as if one could get through nothing more, either rich or savory, but a sweet dish can still be eaten, in summer ices, in winter compote, preserves, and the like. And thus we have a dinner, a modest dinner. The pleasure of such a dinner can be greatly increased. And it is augmented, and there is no limit to this increase: stimulating snacks, "zakouskas" before dinner, and entremets and desserts, and various combinations of savory things, and flowers and decorations and music during dinner.

And, strange to say, men who daily overeat themselves at such dinners, — in comparison with which the feast of Belshazzar, which evoked the prophetic warning, was nothing, — are naïvely persuaded that they may at the same time lead a moral life.

IX

Fasting is an indispensable condition of a good life; but in fasting, as in temperance in general, the question arises with what shall we begin, how to fast, — how

often to eat, what to eat, what to avoid eating? And as we can do no work seriously without regarding the necessary order of sequence, so also we cannot fast without knowing where to begin, — with what to commence temperance in food.

Fasting! And moreover the analysis of how to fast, and where to begin. This notion seems ridiculous to the majority of men.

I remember how once an evangelical preacher who was attacking monastic asceticism and priding himself on his originality said to me, "My Christianity is not concerned with fasting and privations, but with beefsteaks." Christianity, or virtue in general — with beefsteaks!

During that long period of darkness and of the absence of all guidance, heathen or Christian, so many wild, immoral ideas got infused into our life, especially into that lower region concerning the first steps toward a good life, — our relation to food, to which no one paid any attention, — that it is difficult for us even to understand the audacity and senselessness of upholding Christianity or virtue with beefsteaks.

We are not horrified by this association solely because a strange thing has befallen us. We look and see not; listen and hear not. There is no bad odor, no sound, no monstrosity, to which man cannot become accustomed, so that he ceases to remark that which would strike a man unaccustomed to it. Precisely so it is in the moral region. Christianity and morality with beefsteaks!

A few days ago I visited the slaughter-house in our town of Tula. It is constructed according to the new and improved system practised in large towns, with a view to the animals suffering as little as possible. It was on a Friday, two days before Trinity Sunday. There were many cattle there.

Long before this, when reading the excellent book, "The Ethics of Diet," I had wished to visit a slaughter-house, in order to see with my own eyes the truth of the matter brought in question when vegetarianism is discussed. But at first I felt ashamed to do so, as

one is always ashamed of going to look at suffering which one knows is about to take place, but cannot avert; and so I kept putting off my visit.

But a little while ago I met on the road a butcher returning to Tula after a visit to his home. He was not as yet an experienced butcher, and his duty was to stab with a knife. I asked him whether he did not feel sorry to kill animals. And he gave me the usual answer: "Why should I feel sorry? It is necessary."

But when I told him that eating meat is not necessary, but is only a luxury, he agreed, and then he admitted that he was sorry.

"But what can I do? I must earn my bread," he said. "At first I was *afraid* to kill. My father, he never even killed a chicken in all his life."

The majority of Russians cannot kill, they feel pity, and express it by the words "*to be afraid.*" This man had also been afraid, but he was so no longer. He told me that most of the work was done on Fridays, when it continues until the evening.

Not long ago I also talked with a retired soldier, a butcher, and he too was astonished at my assertion that it was a pity to kill, and said the usual things about its being ordained; but afterward he agreed with me: "Especially when they are quiet, tame cattle. They come, poor things, and trust you. It is very pitiful."

This is dreadful. Not the suffering and death of the animals, but that a man suppresses within himself, unnecessarily, the highest spiritual capacity, that of sympathy and pity toward living creatures like himself, and by violating himself becomes cruel. And how deeply seated in the human heart is the injunction not to kill animals!

Once, when walking near Moscow, I was offered a lift by some carmen who were going from Serpukhovo to a neighboring forest to fetch wood. It was the Thursday before Easter. I was seated in the first cart, with the izvoshchik, a strong, red, coarse muzhik, who evidently drank. On entering one village we saw a well-fed, naked, pink pig being dragged out of the first yard to be slaughtered. It was squealing in a desperate

voice, resembling the shriek of a man. Just as we were passing they began to kill it. One of the men gashed its throat with a knife. The pig squealed still more loudly and piercingly, broke away from them, and ran off covered with blood. Being near-sighted, I did not see all the details. I saw only the human-looking pink body of the pig, and heard its desperate squeal; but the carter saw all the details and watched closely. They caught the pig, knocked it down, and finished cutting its throat. When its squeals ceased the izvoshchik sighed heavily. "Do men really not have to answer for this?" he said.

So strong is man's aversion to all killing; but by example, by encouraging greediness, by the assertion that God has allowed it, and, above all by habit, people are entirely deprived of this natural feeling.

On Friday I went to Tula, and meeting a gentle, kind acquaintance of mine, I invited him to accompany me.

"Yes, I have heard that the arrangements are good, and have been wishing to go and see it; but if they are slaughtering, I will not go in."

"Why not? That is just what I want to see! If we eat meat, it must be killed."

"No, no, I cannot."

It is worth while to remark that this man is a sportsman, and himself kills beasts and birds.

So we went to the slaughter-house. Even at the entrance one could perceive the heavy, disgusting, fetid smell of carpenter's glue or paint on glue. The nearer we approached, the stronger became the smell. The building is of red brick, very large, with vaults and high chimneys. We entered the gates. To the right was a spacious inclosed yard, three-quarters of an acre in extent, — twice a week cattle are driven in here for sale, — and adjoining this inclosure was the porter's lodge. To the left were the "chambers," as they are called, *i.e.* rooms with arched entrances, sloping asphalt floors, and contrivances for the moving and hanging up of carcasses. On a bench against the wall of the porter's lodge were seated half a dozen butchers, in frocks covered with blood, their tucked-up sleeves disclosing their muscular

arms, also besmeared with blood. Their work had been completed half an hour ago, so that day we could only see the empty "chambers." Notwithstanding that these chambers were open on both sides, there was an oppressive smell of warm blood, the floor was brown and shining, with congealed black blood in the cavities.

One of the butchers described the process of slaughtering, and showed us the place where it was done. I did not quite understand him, and formed for myself a wrong, but very horrible, idea of the way the animals are slaughtered; and I fancied that, as is often the case, the reality would very likely produce upon me a weaker impression than the imagination. But in this I was mistaken.

The next time I visited the slaughter-house I went in time. It was the Friday before Trinity. It was a warm day in June. The smell of glue and blood was even stronger and more penetrating than on my first visit. The work was at its height. The dusty yard was full of cattle, and animals had been driven into all the inclosures beside the chambers.

In the street, before the entrance, stood carts to which oxen, calves, and cows were tied. Other carts drawn by good horses and filled with live calves, their heads hanging down and swaying about, drew up and were unloaded; and similar carts containing the carcasses of oxen, with trembling legs sticking out, with heads and bright red lungs and brown livers, drove away from the slaughter-house. By the fence stood the cattle-dealers' horses. The dealers themselves, in their long coats, with their whips and knouts in their hands, were walking about the yard, either marking with tar the cattle belonging to the same owner, or bargaining or else directing the passage of the oxen and bulls from the great yard into the inclosures which led into the chambers. These men were evidently all preoccupied with money dealings and calculations, and any thought as to whether it was right or wrong to kill these animals was as far from their minds as questions about the chemical composition of the blood that covered the floor of the chambers.

No butchers were to be seen in the yard; they were all in the chambers, at work. That day about a hundred head of cattle were slaughtered. I was about to enter one of the chambers, but stopped short at the door. I stopped because the chamber was crowded with carcasses being moved about, and also because blood was flowing below and dropping from above. All the butchers present were besmeared with blood, and, had I entered, I should certainly have been covered with it. One suspended carcass was being taken down, another was being moved toward the door, a third, a slaughtered ox, was lying with its white legs raised, while a butcher with his strong hand was ripping up its tight-stretched hide.

Through the door opposite to the one at which I was standing, a big, red, well-fed ox was led in. Two men were dragging it, and hardly had it entered when I saw a butcher raise a knife above its neck and stab it. The ox, as if all four legs had suddenly given way, fell heavily upon its belly, immediately turned over on one side, and began to work its legs and all its hind quarters. Another butcher immediately threw himself upon the ox from the side opposite to the twitching legs, caught its horns, twisted its head down to the ground, while another butcher cut its throat with a knife. From beneath the head there flowed a stream of blackish red blood, which a besmeared boy caught in a tin basin. All the time this was going on, the ox kept incessantly twitching its head as if trying to get up, and waved its four legs in the air. The basin was quickly filling, but the ox still lived, and, its stomach heaving heavily, both hind and fore legs worked so violently that the butchers held aloof. When one basin was full, the boy carried it away on his head to the albumen factory, while another boy placed a fresh basin which also began to fill up. But still the ox heaved its body and worked its hind legs.

When the blood ceased to flow, the butcher raised the animal's head and began to skin it. The ox continued to writhe. The head, stripped of its skin, showed red with white veins, and kept the position given

it by the butcher; on both sides hung the skin. Still the animal did not cease to writhe. Then another butcher caught hold of one of the legs, broke it, and cut it off. In the remaining legs and the stomach the convulsions still continued. The other legs were cut off and thrown aside, together with those of other oxen belonging to the same owner. Then the carcass was dragged away and hung up, and here the convulsions ceased.

Thus I looked on from the door at the second, third, fourth ox. With all it was the same: the same cutting off of the head with the tongue bitten, and the same convulsed members. The only difference was that the butcher did not always strike at once so as to make the animal fall. Sometimes he missed his aim, upon which the ox leaped up, roared, and, covered with blood, tried to escape. But then his head was pulled under the bar, struck a second time, and he fell.

I afterward entered by the door through which the oxen were led in. Here I saw the same thing, only nearer and therefore more plainly. I also saw here what I had not seen before: how the oxen were forced to enter the door. Each time an ox was seized in the inclosure and pulled forward by a rope tied to its horns; the animal, smelling blood, refused to advance, sometimes bellowed and drew back. Two men were unable to drag it in by force, so one of the butchers went round each time and grasped the animal's tail and twitched it, breaking the stump so that the gristle crackled, — then the ox advanced.

When they had finished with the cattle of one owner, they brought in those of another. The first animal of this next lot was not an ox, but a bull — a fine, well-bred creature, black with white spots on legs, young, muscular, full of energy. He was dragged forward, lowering his head and resisted sturdily. But the butcher, who followed behind, seized the tail, — like an engine-driver grasping the handle of the whistle, — twisted it, the gristle cracked, and the bull rushed forward, upsetting the men who held the rope. Then

it stopped, squinting with its black eyes, the white of which had filled with blood. But again the tail cracked, and the bull sprang forward and reached the required spot. The striker approached, took aim, and struck. But the blow missed the mark. The bull leaped up, shook its head, roared, and, covered with blood, got free and rushed back. The men in the doorway all sprang aside. But the butchers, with the dash of men inured to danger, quickly caught the rope, again the tail operation, and again the bull was in the chamber, where he was dragged under the bar, from which he did not again escape. The striker quickly took aim at the spot where the hair divides like a star, and, notwithstanding the blood, found it, struck, and the fine animal, full of life, fell, its head and legs writhing as it was bled and the head skinned.

"There, the cursed devil has fallen on the wrong side again," grumbled the butcher as he cut the skin from the head.

Five minutes later the head was stuck up, red instead of black, without skin, the eyes, that had shone with such splendid color five minutes before, fixed and glassy.

Afterward I went into the compartment where small animals are slaughtered,—a spacious chamber with asphalt floor, and tables with backs, on which sheep and calves are killed. Here the work was already finished; there were only two butchers in the chamber. One was blowing into the leg of a dead lamb and patting the swollen stomach with his hand; the other, a young fellow in a frock besmeared with blood, was smoking a cigarette. There was no one else in the long, dark chamber, pervaded with the smell of blood. After me there entered a man, apparently an ex-soldier, bringing in a young yearling ram, black with a white mark on its neck, with its legs tied. This animal he placed upon one of the tables, as if upon a bed. The old soldier greeted the butchers, with whom he was evidently acquainted, and began to ask about when their master let them have leave. The fellow with the cigarette approached with

a knife, sharpened it on the edge of the table, and answered that they were free on holidays. The live ram was lying as quietly as the dead inflated one, except that it was briskly wagging its short little tail, and its sides were heaving more quickly than usual. The soldier pressed down its uplifted head gently, without effort; the butcher, still continuing the conversation, grasped with his left hand the head of the ram, and cut its throat. The ram quivered, and the little tail stiffened and ceased to wave. The fellow, while waiting for the blood to flow, began to relight his cigarette, which had gone out. The blood flowed, and the ram began to writhe. The conversation continued without the slightest interruption.

And how about those hens and chickens which daily, in thousands of kitchens, with their heads cut off and streaming with blood, comically, dreadfully flop about, jerking their wings.

And you will see a kind, refined lady devour the carcasses of these animals, with full assurance that she is doing right, at the same time asserting two propositions, each of which bars out the other:

First, that she is, as her doctor assures her, so delicate that she cannot be sustained by vegetable food alone, and that for her feeble organism flesh food is indispensable; and secondly, that she is so sensitive that she is unable, not only herself to inflict suffering on animals, but even to bear the sight of suffering.

The truth of the matter is, she is weak, this poor lady, precisely because she has been taught to live upon food unnatural to man; and she cannot avoid causing suffering to animals, because she devours them.

X

We cannot pretend that we do not know this. We are not ostriches, and cannot believe that if we refuse to look at that which we do not wish to see it will not exist. This is especially the case when what we do not

wish to see is what we wish to eat. If it were really indispensable, or, if not indispensable, at least in some way useful, it would be another thing. But it is useful for nothing,[1] and serves only to develop animal feelings, to excite desire, to promote fornication and drunkenness.

And this is continually being confirmed by young, kind, undepraved people, — especially women and girls, — feeling, without knowing how it logically follows, that virtue is incompatible with beefsteaks, and giving up meat as soon as they desire to live good lives.

What, then, do I wish to say? That in order to be moral, people must cease to eat meat? Not at all.

I only wish to say that for a good life a certain order of good deeds is indispensable; that if a man's aspiration toward right living be serious, it will inevitably follow one definite sequence; and that in this sequence the first virtue a man will strive after will be temperance, self-renunciation. And in seeking to be temperate a man will inevitably follow one definite sequence, and in this sequence the first thing will be temperance in food, fasting. And in fasting, if he be really and seriously seeking to live a good life, the first thing from which he will abstain will always be the use of animal food, because, to say nothing of the excitation of the passions caused by such food, its use is simply immoral, as it involves the performance of an act which is contrary to the moral feeling — killing; and is called forth only by greediness, and the desire for savory food.

The precise reason why abstinence from animal food will be the first act of fasting and of a moral life is admirably explained in the book, "The Ethics of Diet;" and not by one man only, but by all mankind in the person of its best representatives during all the conscious life of humanity.

[1] Let those who doubt this read those numerous books upon the subject, written by scientists and doctors, in which it is proved that meat is not necessary for the nourishment of man. And let them not listen to those old-fashioned doctors who defend the assertion that meat food is necessary, only because it has long been so regarded by themselves and their predecessors; who defend their opinion with tenacity and malevolence, as all that is old and outgrown is always defended. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

But why, if the wrongfulness, *i.e.* the immorality, of animal food was so long ago known to humanity, have people not yet come to acknowledge this law? will be asked by those who are accustomed to be led rather by public opinion than by reason. The answer to this question is that the moral progress of humanity — which is the foundation of every other kind of progress — always takes place slowly; but that the sign of true, not casual, progress is its uninterruptedness and continual acceleration.

And so it is with the progress of vegetarianism. This progress is expressed both in the words of the writers cited in the above-mentioned book, and in the very life of mankind, which is continually advancing from the use of animal to that of vegetable food, both unconsciously and also consciously — in vegetarianism, which now manifests especial vigor and is attaining ever greater and greater dimensions. This movement has during the last ten years been steadily accelerating: more and more books and periodicals upon this subject appear every year; one meets more and more people who have given up animal food; and abroad, especially in Germany, England, and America, the number of vegetarian hotels and restaurants is increasing year by year.

This movement must cause especial joy to those whose life consists in seeking to found the kingdom of God upon earth, not because vegetarianism is in itself an important step toward that kingdom (all true steps are both important and unimportant), but because it is a sign that the aspiration of mankind toward moral perfection is serious and sincere, as it has taken the one unalterable order of succession natural to it, beginning with this first step.

One cannot fail to rejoice at this, as people could not fail to rejoice who, after striving to reach the upper story of a house by trying vainly and at random to climb the walls from different points, should at last begin to assemble at the first step of the staircase, and to crowd around it, convinced that there could be no way up except by this first step of the stairs.

1892.

THOUGHTS ON GOD[1]

I

GOD is for me what I strive for — what as I strive for it constitutes my life, and therefore for me He *is;* but He is necessarily such that I cannot comprehend or name Him.

If I understood Him, I should have reached Him, and there would be nothing to strive after and there would be no life. But, and this seems a contradiction, though I cannot understand or name Him, yet at the same time I know Him and the direction toward Him, and even of all my knowledge this is the most certain.

I do not comprehend Him, yet at the same time I am always anxious when I am without Him, and only when I am with Him am I not anxious. What is stranger still is that to know Him more and better than I do at present is not my desire now in this present life, neither is it necessary. I can draw nearer to Him, and I wish

[1] The first six sections of this article are taken from the work published in Geneva under the title *Ponyatiye o Boge* — "The Conception of God." The rest is a collection of extracts from his diaries, private letters, notebook jottings, draught manuscripts of unfinished papers, and various writings of the same kind.

Mr. V. Tchertkof, Tolstoï's former secretary, who has put them together, says: —

"The reader is requested to bear in mind that the thoughts here presented, not being originally intended by the author for publication, are not expressed as precisely and carefully as they would have been had he been preparing them for the general public; and also that the translation of writings of this character affords special difficulties, owing to their rough and unfinished form.

"In order, therefore, that the reader may both do justice to these expressions of thought and himself fully profit by them, it is desirable that he should endeavor to understand any verbal imperfections according to the spirit of the whole paper, and to fill up, in the sense most advantageous for the thought expressed, any omission he may remark."

to do so — in that is my life; but such drawing nearer in no way increases, and cannot increase, my knowledge.

Every endeavor of the imagination to know Him more definitely (for instance, as my Creator, or as a Merciful Being) removes me farther from Him, and prevents me drawing nearer to Him.

Stranger still, I can love truly — that is, more than myself or anything else — Him alone. This love only knows no check, no decrease (on the contrary, all is increase), no sensuality, no insincerity, no subserviency, no fear, no self-satisfaction. Only through this love does one love all that is good; so that one loves and lives only through Him and by Him.

This is how I think, or rather feel. I have only to add that the pronoun "He" somewhat destroys my idea of God: the word "He" somewhat diminishes Him.

To the definition of God I find it necessary to add Matthew Arnold's, which I have always kept in mind as expressing one aspect, and that the chief, in which God presents Himself to us. (Matthew Arnold deduces his definition from the Old Testament prophets, and, indeed, for the time previous to Christ, it is sufficiently complete.) According to Matthew Arnold God is that eternal, infinite "not ourselves" which "makes for righteousness." One may call it the law of human life, the will of God in relation to that part of men's life which is in their power. I say that this definition was sufficient up to the time of Christ, but by Christ it has been revealed to us that the fulfilment of this law, besides its external obligation to human reason, has also another and more simple inner motive which penetrates all man's being, namely, love: love, not of wife, or child, or country, but love of God — *God is Love*, — love of love — that very feeling of kindness, sympathy, and joy of life which constitutes man's natural, blissful, true life which knows no death.

II

I UNDERSTAND by the word "God" that whereby the knowledge of something higher — of righteousness, goodness, gentleness to another being, truth — came into my soul. Having realized this higher idea in my mind, I find in myself the life of God, and am satisfied with it. This higher idea is spirit; when my life is the movement and life of the spirit, then am I filled with something beautiful and joyous, and I do not seek the limits of my life, but I seek only union with that spirit which dwells as well in others as in me. Having realized in myself this higher thing — spirit, I make it manifest surrounding me, I diffuse *Him!* When I find in myself the spirit the highest thing, then I thereby recognize God.

By fulfilling God's will I realize God in myself, what He is. To behold Him, in other words to define Him completely and clearly to apprehend Him, is impossible for me. For me He is the Father of what I call the highest in me. Of course He requires that my life should be the realization of what is highest in the flesh, of what He produces in me.

III

IT may seem strange, but I must confess that I use the term "God" in different significations, depending on whom I am talking with, and what I am talking about. This is so if I employ it consciously. It often falls from my lips unconsciously, for example in the commonly used expressions: *Slava Bohu*, "Glory to God"; *S Bogom*, "Good-by," and the like.

In the first case, that is, when I use the term "God" consciously, it seems to me I very rarely use it separately. In connection with other expressions, it appears in such words as *zhit' po Bozhyi*, "to live in a godly manner." When I say this I really mean "to live righteously, lovingly, reasonably."

Hence, God is righteousness, love, the reason, all the higher limited significations.

I use the expression *Bog* — "God" — as synonymous with Creator with less clearness in my own mind. The Biblical despotic conception of God the Creator is not suited to my mind. The scientific conceptions in part merely complicate the Biblical conception, in part entirely destroy it, substituting for it the conception *chance* or *self-created force;* this also does not satisfy me. When I analyze my mental concept, I find only a commensurable cause which had no beginning. Here are the two principal meanings that I attribute to the word "God." The first I can call *practical* — reason, righteousness, love; the second, *theoretical* — final, endless cause.

Generally speaking, it is impossible to give an accurate definition to the word "God" and still more difficult to pass it by. The most veritable will be: *God is God*, as it is self-defining. Additional concepts will depend on what side you approach him from. Their infinite number is like an endless number of radii to the same center, or like a quantity of paths leading to one and the same mountain-top. And all these radii or paths are subjective.

IV

Besides the activities peculiar to man as an animal, he is conscious in himself of a still higher law of life, which in the first place subjects to him the whole domain of animal inclinations and repulsions; in the second place gives a man the only joyous possibility of perceiving life and the indestructibility of this life; in the third place, animates for him the whole world, even to the tiniest grain of sand, spiritualizes this life; and all the work of the world is for him a movement toward this one only higher law of life. Here is the foundation of the gospel. The gospel teaching takes a trait, an atom, of a man, torn by desire to live, leads him into the house of his parents and friends, and gives him the joy of nearness

and union with his parents. The man then feels, "His own has come to his own."

This is something vital which a man is conscious of in himself; this something vital gives him life, and the joy of life is the "Son of God" in man. And the work of a man exalts this Son of God, lives by it, is united with it. The material for this work is the very native environment in which a man lives, including his own body. You cannot get rid of this work, and a hundred lives like yours would not suffice to accomplish it; but nevertheless work on, and know that this work is the only thing needful, immortal. And whatever you do, you will do all, if only you really do all that you can do.

V

You wish to know how I understand God. Well, here is my answer: —

I believe in Christ and I understand with perfect clearness what He says about the Father, and I acknowledge His Sonship to the Father. I know that you understand it the same way, and that you ask me about something else: that is, What significance has the Father to the whole world and not to man only? This is what I think: I know that God the Father is the beginning, spirit, consciousness, love, thought, life — what is eternal, what is for the whole universe, as consciousness for man. If there is a bond connecting me with all the whole universe of animals and plants, that is the reason why. And everything fulfils His will and receives a blessing; man when he does not fulfil His will is conscious of it, and perishes in accordance with a law unalterable for the whole world, and knows this even while he perishes. This is all I can say hastily in regard to this. As one time I was thinking how painful it is that men do not live in accordance with God's will, suddenly it became clear to me that however a man lives he will always live so that the law will not be broken, and the loss will be man's. He has not fulfilled the law as a

man — he has fulfilled it as an animal, or lower still, as a mass of decomposing flesh. For me this became clear and consoling. In my mind the ordinary mistake is also clear: it is often thought that God exists only for Nature and not for me, or that God exists for me and not for the whole universe at the same time. I clearly understand the unity, the universal cause, for if I do not know it, I cannot think otherwise. My consciousness is the consciousness of the whole universe — in other words, is homogeneous.

VI

Life in me is consciousness. Consciousness is not mine — it does not depend on my will; it comes and goes as it wishes, but when it is in me then I am not less than it. I am perfectly conscious of my consciousness. Consciousness is the most unquestionable of all things that exist. Consciousness has no time or space; it has nothing personal, is not good or evil. I am alive while I am conscious, and when it is in me, I cannot be unconscious of it. This consciousness is also God. I cannot know what God is outside of me, just as I cannot know whence arises the consciousness in me — I know it when it is in me. I know at the same time that I and consciousness are not one, but two things, because consciousness may be for me a pain and a happiness, according as I treat it.

I remember the time when my consciousness poisoned my life. I remember how at that time I adapted myself to it; and now I know that it is the only thing that gives me happiness, and that outside of judgment, by it there is no true or inviolable happiness.

What adapted this consciousness to me was reason. Reason is the light that shines upon me through consciousness (the abode of life in me). I put it to myself thus: The temporary abode of life in me is a tunnel. Consciousness is a light. Reason is a lamp adapted to the tunnel. When I have come out of the tunnel, I

no longer need the lamp, but while I am in the tunnel the lamp is precious, as the light adapted to the tunnel. The adaptation of consciousness to me is to love, to serve my fellow-men, not to consider the mandates of consciousness, though they poison my comfort, as an unhappiness, but on the contrary as a salvation — in a word, this adaptation is also reason.

When I live in accordance with reason, then I am well off, that is, I am happy; when I live without reason, then I am in an evil state, in other words, I suffer from want of reason and melancholy, from the contrariety of consciousness and my passions.

In God there is neither good nor evil — that is to say, in the consciousness outside of me there is no good or evil. Good and evil exist only for me, and I can do either only for myself. Good is the service of consciousness, evil is the revolt against consciousness; but since consciousness is the life in me, so good is life and the service of life, while evil is the failure to comprehend life in oneself.

God, that is consciousness, is no respecter of persons; consciousness does not love and does not hate. Love is my sustenance, so that consciousness might become my delight. Consciousness in me has neither past nor present, and for that reason is eternal, and will not die. Here I am conscious, here I am eternal, because when I am conscious, I am no longer *I*, but consciousness only, eternal, not in the future, not at any past time, but now, at the present, because the present is eternal and endless. There is nothing eternal in the past, as in the future, because there is no future and no past — they only are presentations, they are only forms of actual thoughts — there is only the present and that is endless.

If a man rebels against consciousness, then for him immediately and forever the present perishes — he is in death; in other words, he is deprived of consciousness, and this death is absolute, without the slightest relief, since this death from a quarrel with consciousness means deprivation of all life. If a man, however, serves

consciousness with his reason, then he is in complete life, and for him there is no trace of death, nothing terrible and unknown — he is then endlessly alive, as alive as consciousness itself.

VII

One knows God, not so much through reason, nor even through the heart, but through one's feeling of complete dependence on Him, akin to the feeling experienced by an unweaned child in the arms of its mother. It does not know who holds it, warms it, feeds it; but it knows that there is this someone; and more than merely knows — it loves that being.

Formerly I witnessed the phenomena of life without thinking whence they came, or why I witnessed them.

Subsequently I realized that all I see is the outcome of light, which is understanding. And I was so glad to have brought everything into harmony, that I was quite satisfied in acknowledging the understanding alone to be the source of everything.

But after that I saw that the understanding is a light which reaches me through a kind of dim glass. I see the light, but its source I do not know. Yet I know that the source exists.

This same source of the light that enlightens me — a source I do not know, but the existence of which I do know — is God.

VIII

Yes, love is God.

Love — love him who has caused thee pain, whom thou hast blamed, disliked; and then all that which had concealed his soul from thee will disappear, and thou wilt, as through clear water, see at the bottom of his soul the divine essence of his love; and thou wilt not have to, thou wilt not be able to, pardon him; thou

wilt only have to pardon thyself for not having loved God in him in whom He was, and for not having seen Him through the absence of thy love.

Love is the manifestation within oneself (the consciousness) of God, and therefore the propensity to get out of oneself, to liberate oneself, to live a godly life. And this propensity calls forth God, *i.e.* love, in others.

This is not expressed clearly.

My chief idea is that love evokes love in others. God, having awakened in me, produces the awakening of the same God in others also.

To love means to desire that which the one we love desires. But men desire opposite things, whereas that only can be loved which desires one and the same thing. One and the same thing is desired only by God.

To love God means to desire that which He desires. And He desires universal welfare.

"Brethren, let us love one another. He that loveth is born of God and knoweth God, because (it is written 'God is Love,' but we ought to say) Love is God." But also God is love, *i.e.* we know God only in the form of love; and love is God, *i.e.* if we love, we are not God's, but God.

IX

It is astonishing how I could formerly fail to see the indubitable truth, that behind this world and our life in it, is some one, something, that knows why this world exists, and why we in it, like bubbles in boiling water, rise, burst, and disappear.

It is certain that something is being done in this world, and that by all living beings; being done by me, by my life. Otherwise, wherefore this sun, these seasons, and above all, wherefore this three-year-old child, frenzied with superabundance of life; that old woman who has outlived her reason, or yonder lunatic? These separate

beings, which in my eyes evidently have no meaning, and which are yet living so vigorously, are so tenacious of life, and in whom life is so firmly planted, those beings more than anything convince me that they are wanted for some purpose that is wise and good, and inaccessible to me.

X

Somehow, while praying to God, it became clear to me that God is indeed a real Being, Love — is that All which I just touch, and which I experience in the form of love. And this is not a feeling, not an abstraction, but a real Being; and I have felt Him.

All that I know, I know because there is a God, and because I know Him. Only upon this can one firmly base one's relations with other men and with oneself, as well as with life outside space and time. Not only do I regard this as not mystical, but I hold the opposite view to be mystical, whereas this is the most intelligible and accessible reality.

XI

Why are you downcast? You are waiting for something too great — waiting, it seems to me, for God in thunder and storm, and not in stillness. The best of it is that, as you say, you cannot "get away anywhere." In this the hand of God is most visible and palpable.

You say that I do not seem to acknowledge God. This is a misunderstanding. I acknowledge nothing but God.

I think I wrote and spoke to you about my definition of God, which I would now give in answer to the question, What is God? *God is that All, that infinite All, of which I am conscious of being a part, and therefore all in me is encompassed by God, and I feel Him in everything.*

And this is not at all a play of words; it is that by which I live.

What is God? Wherefore God?

God is that *un*limited *all* which I know within myself in a limited form. I am limited, God is infinite; I am a being which has lived sixty-three years, God lives eternally; I am a being which reasons within the limits of its understanding, God reasons without limit; I am a being which loves sometimes a little, God loves always infinitely. I am a part, He is all. I cannot understand myself otherwise than as a part of Him.

When an unsolved question torments one, then one feels oneself to be a diseased member of some whole, healthy body; one feels oneself to be an unsound tooth in a sound body, and asks the whole body to help the one member.

The whole body is God; the member is myself.

XII

One of the superstitions that most confuse our metaphysical conceptions, is the superstition that the world was created, that it arose out of nothing, and that there is a God-Creator.

In reality we have no ground for imagining a God-Creator, nor any necessity. The Chinese and Indians have no such conception, and moreover a Creator, a Providence, is incompatible with the Christian God-Father, God-Spirit, — the God who is Love, a particle of whom lives in me and constitutes my life, the manifestation and avocation of which particle constitutes the meaning of my life.

God the Creator is indifferent, and allows suffering and evil. God the Spirit delivers from suffering and evil, and is always perfect welfare. A God-Creator there is not. There is *myself* acknowledging the universe through the faculties given me, and inwardly

recognizing my Father-God. He is the origin of my spiritual self — the external world is only my limit.

People often speak of the evil which God causes to men (for instance, when they are overcome with grief at the loss of one they love), and while so saying and thinking, they imagine that they believe in God, and they pray to Him.

God does evil! And, if God does evil, He is not good, not Love; and, if He is not good, then He does not exist.

This comes of people being so certain that what they do wrongly is not only good but excellent — as when they affirm that to give all one's love to one's children is very good — so that when they experience the evil which is only the result of their own mistakes, their own sins, they blame, not themselves, but God. And they therefore, in the depth of their soul, acknowledge God to be evil, *i.e.* deny Him, and therefore do not receive consolation from Him.

One should do as do the Spirit-Wrestlers — bow down to the ground before every man, remembering that in him is God. If to bow physically is impracticable, we should at least do so spiritually.

XIII

The consciousness, the sensation of God who is living in me and acting through me, cannot be felt always.

There are activities to which one has got to give oneself up altogether, unlimitedly, without thinking of anything save that one thing. In these cases it is impossible to think of God; it would distract, and is unnecessary.

One should live simply, without exertion, giving oneself up to one's tendencies; but the moment there arise inward doubt, struggle, despondency, fear, ill-will, then immediately, recognizing in oneself one's spiritual being,

recognizing one's connection with God, one should transport oneself from the material into the spiritual region; and that not in order to escape the work of life, but, on the contrary, to gather strength for its accomplishment, for the victory over, the mastering of, the obstacle. Like a bird — to advance on one's legs with folded wings, but the moment an obstacle is encountered, then to unfold one's wings and fly up . . . and one finds relief, and one's burden disappears.

This is what has happened to me: I began to think more and more abstractedly about the problems of life — In what does life consist? What is its aim? What is love? — and I got farther and farther away, not only from the Old Testament conception of God the Creator, but also from the conception of Him as a Father, the righteous source of all life, and of my own being. And the devil ensnared me, and it began to enter my mind that it is possible, and especially desirable for union with the Chinese Confucians, with the Buddhists, and our own atheists and agnostics, altogether to avoid this conception. I thought it was possible to restrict oneself to the conception and acknowledgment of that God only which is in me, without acknowledging any God apart from that — without acknowledging the One who has implanted in me a particle of Himself. And, strange to say, I suddenly began to feel dull, depressed, and alarmed. I did not know the cause of this, but I felt that I had suddenly undergone a dreadful spiritual fall, had lost all spiritual joy and energy.

And then only did I comprehend that this had happened because I had deserted God. And I began to think, and, strange to say, to guess whether there be a God or not; and I found Him, as it were, afresh. And I was filled with such joy, and such a firm assurance did I gain of Him, and of the possibility and duty of communion with Him, and of His hearing me; and my joy grew so great that all these last days I have been experiencing the feeling that something very good has come to me, and I keep asking myself, "Why do I feel

so happy? Yes! God! There *is* a God, and I need be neither anxious nor afraid, but can only rejoice."

I am afraid that this feeling will pass away, will grow dull; but for the present it is very joyous. It is as if I had been within a hair's-breadth of losing, nay, had thought that I had actually lost, the Being dearest to me; and yet had not so lost Him, but had only realized His priceless worth. I hope, if it does pass away, that it will only be the ecstatic feeling, but that there will remain much of what I have newly gained.

Perhaps this is what some call the "living God"; if that be so, then I did very wrong toward them in contradicting them instead of agreeing with them.

The chief thing in this feeling is a consciousness of entire security, a consciousness that He *is*, that He is good, that He knows me, and that I am entirely surrounded by Him, that I have come from Him, and am going to Him, form a part of Him, am His child. All that seems bad, seems so only because I trust to myself and not in Him, and from this life, in which it is so easy to do His will (this will at the same time being mine), I cannot fall anywhere, except only into Him; and in Him is perfect joy and welfare.

All that I might write would not express what I have felt. Whether I am suffering physical or moral pain, whether my son is dying, or that which I love is perishing and I cannot help it, or sufferings are awaiting me,—suddenly the thought recurs to me: "And how about God?" and all becomes good and joyous and clear.

XIV

THERE is not one believing man to whom moments of doubt do not come — doubt in the existence of God. And these doubts are not harmful; on the contrary, they lead to a higher understanding of God.

That God, whom one knew, has become familiar, and one no more believes in Him. We entirely believe in God only when He discloses Himself afresh to us.

And he discloses Himself to us from a new side when we seek Him with all our soul.

I have been thinking much about God, about the essence of my life, and, as it seemed, only to feel doubtful as to both the one and the other; and I questioned the evidence of His existence. And then, not long ago, I simply felt the desire to lean myself upon faith in God, and in the imperishableness of my soul; and to my astonishment I felt such a firm, quiet assurance as I had never felt before. So that all the doubts and testings evidently not only did not weaken, but to an enormous extent confirmed, my faith.

One should never go to God, as it were "on purpose." "Now let me just go to God. I will begin to live according to God. I have been living according to the devil; let me now try to live according to God; who knows — perhaps no harm will come of it...."

There *is* harm in this, and great harm. Coming to God is something like getting married: one should do it only when one would be glad not to come to Him, or not to get married, but cannot help doing so. And therefore it is not that I would tell a man: "Go purposely into temptations"; but to him who formulates the question thus: "Well, and is it certain that I will not lose by going to God instead of to the devil?" — I would cry out as loud as I can: "Go, go to the devil, by all means to the devil!"

It is a hundred times better to get well scalded against the devil than to continually stand at the cross-roads, or insincerely go to God.

XV

I HAVE read Herbert Spencer's reply to Balfour,[1] the profession of agnosticism, as they now call atheism.

I mean that agnosticism, although it wishes to be something different from atheism by setting up the supposed impossibility of knowing, yet is, in reality, the

[1] From an article by Herbert Spencer on "Mr. Balfour's Dialectics."

same as atheism, because their common root is the non-acceptance of a God.

And so I read Herbert Spencer, who says that he does not *desire* to throw off belief in God, but that he is obliged to do so; self-deception is the only other alternative. "There is no pleasure," he says, "in the consciousness of being an infinitesimal bubble on a globe that is itself infinitesimal compared with the totality of things." (I should like to ask him what he understands by "the totality of things.") "Those on whom the unpitying rush of changes inflicts sufferings which are often without remedy, find no consolation in the thought that they are at the mercy of blind forces, which cause, indifferently, now the destruction of a sun, and now the death of an animalcule. Contemplation of a universe which is without intelligible purpose yields no satisfaction. The desire to know what it all means is no less strong in the agnostic than in others, and raises sympathy with them. Failing utterly to find any interpretation himself, he feels a regretful inability to accept the interpretations they offer."

Some one else was saying exactly the same thing to me the other day. "A sort of circumrotation takes place, and in the center of this vortex, endless in time and space, *I* appear, live, and disappear. This is certain. All the rest — *i.e.* the conception of some intelligent being, from which I have proceeded, and for the attainment of whose object I exist in common with all that exists — such a conception is a self-deception."

There are two distinct and mutually contradictory theories of the universe, which may be represented thus: —

The agnostic says, "Myself, a being born of my parents, I observe in the same way as all other living beings which surround me, and which exist under certain conditions subject to my examination and study; and I study myself and other objects, both animate and inanimate, and the conditions in which they exist. And in accordance with this study I order my life. Questions as to origin I investigate in the same way, both by

observation and by experiment, and I attain a greater and greater knowledge of them. As to the question whence all this universe has proceeded, why it exists, and why I exist in it, I leave it unanswered, as I do not see the possibility of answering it as definitely, clearly, and convincingly as I answer questions concerning the conditions of things *in* the universe. And therefore the answer to this question which consists in saying that there exists a supposed rational Being, a God, from whom I have proceeded (it is generally said, 'from whom the world proceeds,' by which is meant the creation of the world, which the Christian teaching does not affirm), which Being, for some reason known to itself, has determined the law of my life — this answer to the question I do not accept, as it does not contain the clearness and demonstrability possessed by the scientific answers to the questions concerning the causes and conditions of various natural phenomena."

So says the agnostic, and in not admitting the possibility of any other knowledge but what is acquired by observation and the analysis of observation, he is, if not right, at least quite logical and consequent.

The Christian, on the other hand, acknowledging God, says, "I am conscious that I exist only because I feel myself to be a rational being. And in feeling myself to be so, I cannot but recognize that my life and that of all that exists must be equally rational. And in order to be so it must have an object. The object of my life must be outside myself, in that Being for which both I and all that exists serve as instruments for the attainment of the object of life. This Being does exist, and I must, in my life, fulfil its law or will. Questions as to the nature of this Being which demands of me the fulfilment of its law, and as to when and how, in time and space, this rational life originated in me and originates in other beings — *i.e.* 'What is God?' 'Is He personal or impersonal?' 'Did He create the world, and how?' 'When did a soul awake in me?' 'At what time, and how, did it originate in others?' 'Whence has it come and whither will it go?' 'In what part of

the body does it reside?' — all these questions I must leave unanswered, because I know beforehand that in the region of their observation and analysis I shall never come to a definite answer, as all will disappear into the infinitude of time and space. For this reason I do not accept the answers given by science as to how the universe (the suns and worlds) has originated, how the soul originates, and in what part of the brain it is located."

In the first instance the agnostic, acknowledging himself to be a mere animal, and therefore admitting that he is subject only to external sensations, does not admit a spiritual origin, and resigns himself to that senselessness of existence which violates the demands of reason.

In the second instance the Christian, acknowledging himself to be only a rational being, and therefore accepting only that which corresponds to the demands of reason, does not acknowledge the adequacy of the data of external experience, and considers those data fantastic and erroneous.

Both are equally right. But the difference between them, and an essential one, lies in the fact that, according to the former conception, everything in the universe is strictly scientific, logical, and rational, except the meaning of the life itself of man and the whole universe; and they have no meaning, and consequently, from such a conception, there may proceed very many interesting and amusing considerations, but, notwithstanding all efforts to the contrary, nothing necessary for guidance in life. Whereas, according to the latter conception, the life of man and of the whole universe acquires a definite, rational meaning, which has the most direct, simple, and universally accessible adaptability to life, at the same time not excluding the possibility of scientific investigations which, in this case, are put in their proper place.

XVI

NOTHING better proves the existence of God than the attempts of the evolutionists to accept morality and deduce it from the struggle for existence.

It is obvious that morality cannot emanate from struggle; and yet they feel that we cannot do without it, acknowledge its existence, and endeavor to deduce it from their own propositions; though to deduce it from the theory of evolution is as strange and illogical (or even more so) as to deduce it from the ordinances given by the Hebrew God on Sinai. Their mistake, which consists in denying the consciousness of one's spiritual self as a product of God, a particle of Him, without which there can be no rational view of life, — this mistake forces them to admit an unjustifiable and even contradictory mystery, *i.e.* to admit in the form of morality that same God whom they have excluded from their view of life.

XVII

THE other day a Frenchman asked me, "Would it not be sufficient to base morality upon righteousness and beauty?" *i.e.* again that same God whom they are afraid to name.

Let us endeavor to express that which we know, that which is necessary to us, joyful and certain; and God (the same whom you think it necessary to evade) will help us. By naming Him I acknowledge my incompleteness, I, His weak, small vessel, endeavor to open myself — that part of me which can receive Him — in order that He may enter into me, in so far as I am able and worthy to receive Him.

Above all, He is necessary to me in order that I may express whither I am tending and to whom I go. In this monotonous earthly life I may not feel Him, I may do without this form of thought and expression; but in

relation to this passage from the past life into this one, and from this one into another, I cannot avoid expressing by Him that from whence I come and whither I am going, this being the form of expression nearest to the true character of the case; from God to God, *i.e.* from that which is outside of time and space to the same again.

XVIII

It is not that I altogether agree with what you say about the understanding and about God, but my thoughts are in conformity with yours. I do not say that I agree, because in speaking about these matters it is often difficult to express accurately what one thinks, and words may say too much or too little, and therefore it is never possible to admit that a certain way of formulating completely corresponds to one's conception. But I see that we think and feel in the same direction, and this gives me great pleasure. It is impossible not to think about these matters, but each of us involuntarily thinks in his own way. To formulate one's thoughts in the way it has been done in various creeds is not only useless, but may be dangerous. It is possible and necessary to formulate deductions which are applicable to life, as did Moses: "Thou shalt not kill!" or Christ: "Resist not evil!" I repeat, however, that I think in the same direction, and quite agree with you that the understanding is attainable in proportion to one's purity, humility, and love.

XIX

What am I here, abandoned in the midst of this world? To whom shall I turn? From whom shall I seek an answer? — From men?

They do not know; they laugh; they do not wish to know. They say, "That is nonsense. Do not think about it. Here is the world and its attractions — live!"

But they shall not deceive me. I know that they do

not believe what they say. They too, like me, are tormented and suffer from the fear of death, of themselves, and of Thee, Lord, whom they do not wish to name.

I too, for long did not name Thee, and I too did the same that they do. I know this deception, and how it oppresses the heart, and how terrible is the fire of despair which is concealed in the heart of him who does not name Thee. However much they strive to quench it, it will burn up their heart as it used to burn mine.

But, Lord, I named Thee, and my sufferings ceased. My despair has passed.

I cursed my weakness, but I seek Thy way and do not despair. I feel Thy nearness, feel Thy help when I walk in Thy ways, and Thy pardon when I stray from thee.

Thy way is clear and plain. Thy yoke is easy and Thy burden light, but I have long wandered outside Thy ways, long in the abominations of my youth have I proudly flung off every burden, freed myself from every yoke, and untaught myself to walk in Thy ways; and both Thy yoke and Thy burden have become heavy for me, though I know they are good and light.

Lord, pardon the errors of my youth, and help me to bear Thy yoke as joyfully as I accept it.

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE

"LIFE AND DEATH OF DROZHIN"[1]

MOSES, in his commandments given to mankind five thousand years ago, laid down the law: *Thou shalt not kill.* The same command has been preached by all the prophets; the same law has been preached by the sages and teachers of the whole world; the same law was preached by Christ, who forbade not only murder, but everything that might lead to it, all provocation and anger against one's brother. And the same is written in the heart of every man so clearly that no action is more opposed to the whole being of every unperverted man than the murder of his own kind — of

[1] Yevdokim Nikititch Drozhin, or Drozhzhin, was born August 11, 1866, at Tolstui Lug in the Government of Kursk, Russia. His parents were peasants. He early displayed great love for learning, and before he was seventeen he was an assistant in a local parochial school. Afterward he received instruction in the Teacher's Seminary at Byelgorod. Through the influence of a young peasant from his own locality — Nikolaï Trofimovitch Izyumchenko — he became imbued with socialistic and revolutionary views, and on this account was not allowed to graduate, but afterward he qualified as a teacher and accepted a position as village teacher at Chernitcheva, where he remained two years. In 1899 he made the acquaintance of D. A. Hilkof, and fell under the influence of Count Tolstoï's writings. His literary activities and his exchange of letters with Izyumchenko and others brought upon him the attention of the police and he was arrested. Nearly all the rest of his life is the story of his resistance of the military conscription in accordance with Tolstoï's explanation of Christ's doctrine of non-resistance. He was enrolled in the so-called Disciplinary Battalion, where he was treated with the greatest harshness as if he had been a criminal instead of a Christian. Owing to his hardships his health was broken, and he died of consumption in prison at Voronezh, February 7, 1895. His friend, C. I. Popof, wrote his life, which was published by Vladimir Tchertkof in 1898, together with the present postscript of Count Tolstoï. — ED.

a human being. And here, notwithstanding the fact that this law of God was clearly revealed to us by Moses, by the prophets, and by Christ, and is written so ineradicably in our hearts that there can be no doubt of its obligation upon us, not only this law is not recognized in our world, but a law absolutely opposed to this is recognized — the law of the obligation for every man of our time to be enrolled in the military service; in other words, to stand in the ranks of murderers, to take an oath of readiness to commit murder, to learn the trade of killing, and actually to kill one's fellow-men whenever this is required.[1]

In the time of heathendom, the Christians were commanded to express in words their recantation of belief in Christ and God, and as a sign of their recantation to offer sacrifices to the heathen gods.

Now, in our time, Christians are compelled to renounce Christ and God, not only by the offer of sacrifice to the heathen gods — to offer sacrifices to the heathen gods is possible even while remaining a Christian at heart — but also by doing an action which is most indubitably opposed to Christ and God and forbidden by Christ and God — to take an oath of readiness to commit murder, and very frequently to commit murder itself.

And as formerly men were found who would not consent to worship the heathen gods, and for their faith in Christ and God sacrificed their lives, so also now there have been and are men who will not renounce Christ and God, who will not consent to take oaths of their readiness to commit murder, who will not enter the ranks of murderers, and who, in behalf of their faith, perish in the most horrible sufferings, as was the case with Drozhin whose life is told in this book.

[1] In countries where there is no obligation of military obedience, God's law, and that of conscience concerning murder, although not so evidently, is nevertheless broken by all citizens because the service, the enlistment and the maintenance of armies, put on the basis of money consciously paid by all the citizens for the business of murder, considered necessary by all, is exactly the same kind of consent to murder and coöperation in it as a personal participation in military service. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

And as in days gone by those who were accounted half foolish, strange people, the martyrs of Christianity who perished because they did not wish to renounce Christ, merely by their faith in Christ destroyed the heathen world, and cleared the way for Christianity, so now also, men like Drozhin, who are accounted half foolish and fanatical for preferring tortures and death to disobeying God's law, by their very faith in this law are destroying the existent cruel order of things more effectually than a revolution, and are revealing to men a new and joyous state of universal brotherhood, the coming of the kingdom of God which the prophets foretold and the foundations of which were laid by Christ eighteen hundred years ago.

But besides the fact that men like Drozhin, who refuse to renounce God and Christ, by their action help to bring about the coming of that kingdom of God predicted by the prophets, they show by their example the only undoubted route whereby that kingdom of God may be attained, and all that stands in the way of its establishment may be destroyed.

The distinction between the martyrdoms of Christianity and those of the present day consists only in the fact that then the heathen demanded heathen deeds from the Christians; while now men who are not heathen but Christians, or at least call themselves so, demand of Christians heathen and most horribly heathen deeds, such as murder, which the heathen never demanded: and in this, that then the power of heathendom rested on its ignorance, on the fact that it did not know, did not understand Christianity; while now the cruelty of so-called Christianity rests on deception, on conscious deception.

Then, in order to free Christianity from violence, it was necessary to persuade the heathen of the truth of Christianity; but this in large measure it was impossible to do. Julian the Apostate and many better men of that time were truly persuaded that the heathen religion was an enlightenment and a blessing, while Christianity was darkness, ignorance, and evil. But now, in order to

free Christianity from violence and cruelty, it is necessary only to lay bare the deception of a false Christianity. But this deception is laid bare by one simple, inflexible law of truth, which inevitably invites the false Christian powers to use violence by the torture and murder of Christians for the observation of the very thing which they preach.

Formerly the Christian who refused to worship the heathen gods would say to the heathen: —

"I renounce your faith, I am a Christian, and I cannot and will not serve your gods, but I will serve the only true God and His Son, Jesus Christ."

And the heathen authorities punished him because he preached a religion which they considered false and dangerous, and his punishment did not contain any contradiction, and brought no reproach on that heathen religion in the name of which he was punished.

But now the Christian who renounces murder preaches his doctrine, not to heathen any longer, but to men who call themselves Christians. And if he says, "I am a Christian, and I cannot and will not carry out the demand to murder, which is opposed to the Christian law," then they cannot say to him, as the heathen used to say, "You are practising a false and dangerous religion, and therefore we punish you;" but they say to him: "We also are Christians, but you do not properly understand Christianity when you declare that the Christian cannot kill. The Christian may and must kill when he is commanded to do so by any one who, at a certain moment, considers himself his superior. And for the reason, that you do not agree with the doctrine that the Christian ought not to love his enemies, but ought to kill them all when he is bidden, we Christians who are preaching the law of humility, love, and forgiveness, punish you."

It has come about that the powers calling themselves Christian at every such collision with the men that renounce murder are compelled in the most palpable and triumphant way to be apostates to that Christian and moral law on which alone their power is based.

Moreover, unhappily for the false powers and happily for all humanity, the conditions of military service have become of late entirely different from what they used to be, and consequently the demands of the powers have become still more evidently unchristian, and the refusals to fulfil these demands have become convincing.

Formerly, scarcely a hundredth of all the population was called to the military service, and the authorities might have well supposed that men of a low order of morality would enter the service, such as would find nothing contrary to their Christian consciences in doing so, as used to be the case to a certain degree when men were sent off as soldiers for a punishment. Then, if they summoned to the military service a man who, by his moral qualities, could not be a murderer, this was an unfortunate accident and an exception.

But now, when all men are compelled to undergo military obligations, the best of them, those that are most Christianly disposed and farthest from the possibility of taking part in murder, all have to confess themselves as murderers and apostates from God.

Formerly, the army raised by the authorities was composed of ragged, coarse, unchristian, and ignorant men or volunteers and mercenaries; formerly no one or almost no one read the Gospels, and men did not know its spirit, but believed what the priests told them; and formerly only a few, especially fanatically inclined people, sectaries, considered it a sin to serve in the army, and refused to do so.

But now there is not a single man in Christian countries who would not be consciously under obligations, with his money, and in a large part of Europe personally, to take part in preparations for murder or in murder itself; now almost all men know the Gospels and the spirit of Christ's teachings, all know that the priests are bribed impostors, and no one but the most clownish of men believe in them; and now already not only sectaries, but men who do not preach any special dogma, men of cultivation, free-thinkers, renounce military service, and not only renounce it for themselves, but openly

declare to every one that murder is not compatible with the profession of Christianity.

And, therefore, one such refusal of military service like Drozhin's, a refusal maintained in spite of tortures and death — one such refusal shakes the whole colossal fabric of violence based on falsehood, and threatens it with destruction.

Terrible force is lodged in the hands of the authorities, and not merely a material force, — a vast amount of money, institutions, riches, submissive functionaries of the clergy and the army, — the mighty spiritual forces of influence are lodged in the hands of the government. It can, unless it is bribed, suppress, annihilate, all those that are opposed to it. The suborned clergy preaches to the soldiers in the churches; suborned writers write books justifying the army; in the schools, those of higher and those of lower grade, false catechisms are made obligatory, and the children are taught in accordance with them that to kill in war and in executing justice is not only possible, but mandatory. All those that enter the army take the oath of allegiance; everything that might reveal the deception is sternly repressed and punished — the most terrible punishments are inflicted on men that refuse to carry out the demands of service in the army, that is, of murder.

And wonderful to relate, all this vast potential mass of men, armed with all the powers of human authority, trembles, and hides itself, feeling its fault, and shakes in its very being, and is ready at any minute to crumble and fly into powder, at the appearance of a single man like Drozhin who would not yield to human demands, but obeyed the law of God and was faithful to it.[1]

[1] Mr. E. I. Popof in a note says: "In September I sent to one of the newspapers a brief obituary of Drozhin, relating the cause of his imprisonment, sickness, and death, and this obituary was soon reprinted in other periodicals: *Nedyelya* (The Week), No. 36; *Russkiya Vyedomosti*, No. 250; *Saratovsky Listok*, No. 193; and strangely enough, the government, it would seem, was obliged to be satisfied with the promulgation, though unofficial, of the severity with which it punished disobedience to military demands, but at the same time, a few days after the obituary was published, it sent a secret circular to all the newspaper offices, forbidding any mention of this man and his work to be made."

And in our day men like Drozhin are not unique; there are thousands, tens of thousands, and their number, and what is better their significance, increases every year and every hour. In Russia we know tens of thousands of men who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the new Tsar, and who regarded military service as murder, inconsistent not merely with Christianity, but with the commonest demands of honor, justice, and morality. We know such men in all the countries of Europe; we know about the Nazarenes who appeared more than fifty years ago in Austria and Servia, and who, from a few hundreds, have now increased to more than thirty thousand, refusing participation in military service in spite of all persecution.

We knew, not long ago, a very highly educated man of perfect independence of thought, an army surgeon, who refused military service because he considered contrary to his conscience service of such an institution as the army, meant only to inflict violence on men and murder them. But, however important it is that there are many of these men, and that they are all the time increasing, it is still more important that the only true way has been found on which humanity undoubtedly proceeds toward its emancipation from the chains of evil that bind it, and that no one and nothing can any longer hinder it, since no violent efforts for the annihilation of evil are required for deliverance along this route; it disappears of itself and melts away as wax in the fire, and all it requires is only not to take part in it. And in order not to take part in this evil from which we suffer, we need no especial intellectual or physical exertions; all it requires is to yield to our nature, to be good and upright before God and in our own eyes.

"You wish me to be a murderer and I cannot do this; both God and my own conscience forbid it. And therefore do with me what you wish, but I will not kill or prepare for murder, or assist in it."

Now this simple reply, which every man ought infallibly to make because it proceeds out of the very consciousness of the men of our day, is destroying all the evils

of violence which have so long weighed down the world. The statement is made that it says this in the sacred Scriptures:[1] —

Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resists the power withstands the ordinance of God, and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldst thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shall have praise from the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he bears not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that does evil. Wherefore you must be in subjection not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For for this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

And therefore it is necessary to be obedient to the authorities.

But now, this most politic Paul, who was telling the Romans that they must be obedient to the authorities, says quite another thing to the Ephesians: —

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of the darkness of this age, against the terrestrial spirits of wickedness.[2]

Paul's advice to the Romans in regard to subjection to the existing authorities can in no wise be reconciled with Christ's words, the whole meaning of which consists in emancipating men from the powers of the world and subjecting them to the power of God alone: —

[1] Rom. xiii. 1–7.
[2] Eph. vi. 10–12 (author's translation).

If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you (John xv. 18).

If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you (John xv. 20).

If you were of the world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you (John xv. 19).

They will deliver you up to the councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you, and before governors and kings shall you stand for my sake for a testimony unto them (Matt. x. 18; Mark xiii. 9).

And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake (Matt. x. 22).

They shall lay their hands on you and shall persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for my name's sake (Luke xxi. 12).

Whoever kills you shall think he is offering service unto God. And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father nor me. But these things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, you may remember them, how I told you (John xvi. 2–4).

Fear them not therefore; for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known (Matt. x. 26).

And be not afraid of them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body (Matt. x. 28).

The prince of this world has been judged (John xvi. 11).

Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world (John xvi. 33).

Christ's whole teaching is a pointing out of the way of emancipation from the power of the world, and Christ, even while He Himself was persecuted, predicted to His disciples that, if they put their faith in His teachings, the world would persecute them. And He advised them to be of good cheer, and not fear their persecutors. But not only did He teach them this by His words; He, by His whole life and His relations to the authorities, gave them an example of how they ought to treat those

that wanted to persecute them. Christ not only did not submit to the authorities, but He kept accusing them: He accused the Pharisees of destroying God's law by their human traditions; He accused them of a false observance of the Sabbath, of a false way of sacrificing in the temples; He accused them for all their hypocrisy and cruelty; He accused the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, and He predicted their destruction.

To the question whether He would pay the tribute imposed at His entrance into Capernaum, He said pointedly that His children, that is, His disciples, were free from all tribute, and were not obliged to pay it; and only that He might not offend the tax-collectors, that He might not tempt them to the sin of committing violence, did He command that the stater which was found by chance in the fish, and which did not belong to any one and had not been taken from any one, should be handed over.

To the crafty question whether tribute should be paid to Cæsar, He said: —

"*Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.*"

In other words, give to Cæsar that which belongs to him and was made by him — money; but God's property, that which God has made and has lodged in you — your soul, your conscience — render up to no one except to God, and therefore do not do for Cæsar anything that God has forbidden. And this answer astonished them all by its boldness, and at the same time by its inevitableness.[1]

When Christ was brought before Pilate as a conspira-

[1] Not merely utter misconception of Christ's teaching, but complete unwillingness to comprehend it, can permit the astonishing misinterpretation whereby the words *to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*, are taken to mean the unavoidability of subjection to Cæsar. In the first place, there is no question of subjection; in the second place, if Christ had recognized the obligation of a money tribute and therefore of subjection, He would have said frankly, "Yes, it must be paid," but He said *render unto Cæsar what is his* — that is to say, money — but your life to God; and by these last words He not only did not encourage subjection to the authorities, but on the contrary He showed that in everything that belongs to God one ought not to be subject to Cæsar. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

tor who was stirring up the people and commanding them not to pay tribute to Cæsar,[1] He, saying what He found it necessary to say, astonished and disturbed all the functionaries by paying no attention to their questions, refusing to answer them. And for this accusing of the authorities and disobedience to them He was condemned and put to death.

The whole history of the suffering and death of Christ is nothing else than the history of those calamities to which every man must be subjected who follows Christ's example in obedience to God, and disobedience to the powers of the world. And now they would persuade us that all Christ's teaching must not only be amended, but changed, in consequence of inconsiderate and crafty words written by Paul to the Romans.

But above and beyond the fact that Paul's words are contrary to Christ's life and teachings, with every desire to be subject to the authorities, as Paul commands, not out of fear but in accordance with conscience, this has become in our time utterly impossible. Passing by the inner contradiction between Christianity and subjection to the authorities — subjection to the authorities, not out of fear, but in accordance with conscience, has become impossible in our time, because, in consequence of the universal spread of knowledge, power as something worthy of respect, something lofty, and above all something definite and complete, has been utterly annihilated, and there is no possibility of rehabilitating it. Now it was a good thing, not from fear but from conscience, to be subject to authority when men saw in authority what the Romans saw, an emperor-God; or as the Chinese see in the God-inspired son of heaven; or as in the Middle Ages, yes, up to the very Revolution, in kings or emperors, God-anointed sovereigns; or as not long since here in Russia the common people saw in the Tsar a terrestrial god; when men did not imagine tsars, kings, and emperors as anything else than gods in supreme positions performing wise and glorious actions: but, as it is now, when, notwithstand-

[1] Luke xxiii. 2.

ing all the endeavors of the authorities and all their partizans, and even of their subjects, to restore the fascination of power, education, history, experience, the common intercourse of men, have destroyed this glamour so that it is as impossible ever to restore it as to restore the ice melted in the spring, and just as impossible to build anything substantial on it as it is to go in a sledge on melting ice and an opening river.

What is to be done now when all, with the exception of the most boorish and uncultivated, who, all the time decreasing in numbers, know very well what kind of depraved people were Louis XI. of France, Elizabeth of England, John IV. of Russia, Catherine, Napoleon, Nicholas I., who reigned and disposed of the fates of millions; and who reigned, not in consequence of any holy, inevitable law, as it used to be thought, but simply because these people were able by various deceptions, tricks, crimes, so to strengthen their power that they could not be cast down, punished, or expelled, as afterward Charles I., Louis XVI., Maximilian of Mexico, Louis Philippe, and others have been.

What is to be done now, when all know that the kings and emperors reigning at the present time not only are not extraordinary, saintly, great, wise men engaged in advancing the interests of their peoples, but on the contrary are for the most part badly educated, ill informed, boastful, depraved, often very stupid and wicked men, occupied not at all with the well-being of their subjects, but with their personal interests, and especially with the desperate task of bolstering up their tottering power, maintained only by chicanery and fraud.

But over and above the fact that men now see the stuff which make the sovereigns who used to seem to them exceptional beings, that men now have looked behind the scenes of this theatrical representation and find it impossible ever to re-create the illusion they used to have, they see and know this also, that these sovereigns do not really reign themselves, but in constitutional monarchies the power is wielded by members of chambers and ministers who have obtained their positions

by intrigues and bribes, and in non-constitutional monarchies by wives, ministries, flatterers, and all kinds of assistants, who manage to attach themselves to their courts.

How can a man feel any respect for power and submit himself to it, not out of fear, but in accordance with his conscience, when he knows that this power is nothing existent apart from himself, but is the outcome of the intrigue, the chicanery of men, and is constantly passing from one person to another. A man who knows this not only cannot conscientiously submit to the power, but he cannot help striving to destroy the existent power and get into possession of it himself; that is to say, having crept into power, he grasps as much as he can. This is what happens in reality.

The power of which Paul spoke, the power to which one may submit conscientiously, has already outlived its time. It no longer exists. Like the ice, it has melted and can no longer support anything. The formerly firm and solid surface of the river has become a liquid, and in order to go on it the sledge and horses are no longer available, you must have a boat and oars. Just exactly in the same way the scale of life in consequence of enlightenment has changed to such a degree that power, in the sense in which it was formerly understood, has no longer any place in our world, but remains a coarse expression of violence and deception. But it is impossible to submit to violence and deception "not because of the wrath but for conscience' sake."

"But how not submit to the authorities? If one does not submit to the authorities, there will be terrible misfortunes; evil men will torment, oppress, and kill the righteous."

I also say, "How avoid submitting to the authorities, how make up our minds not to submit to the authorities, to any undoubted power, that from which we cannot escape, under which we always find ourselves, and the demands of which we know unquestionably, unmistakably?"

It is said, "How make up our minds not to submit to the authorities?"

What powers? In Catherine's time, when Pugatchof[1] was in revolt, half of the people clung to him and were under his power. Which power, then, should one have submitted to — Catherine's or Pugatchof's? Yes, and in the reign of that same Catherine who robbed her husband of his power though they had taken an oath to obey him as Tsar, which should we have felt obliged to obey? Peter III., as before, or Catherine?

Not one Russian Tsar, from Peter I. till Nicholas I. inclusively, mounted the throne in such a way as to leave it evident whose power one must submit to. To whom should one have submitted — Peter I. or Sophia, or Ioann, Peter's elder brother? Sophia had equal rights to the throne, and the proof of it is found in the fact that after her women reigned who had less claims to the throne — the two Catherines, Anna, Elizabeth. Whose power should one have submitted to after Peter, when courtiers alone placed on the throne a soldier's wife, the mistress of the minister — Menshikof, Sheremetief — Peter — Catherine I.? And how about Peter II., then Anna and Elizabeth, and finally Catherine II., who had no more right to the throne than Pugatchof, while in the time of her reign one legitimate heir — Ioann — was kept in prison and was killed by her orders, while another legitimate heir was Paul, a youth who had attained his majority? And whose authority should one have submitted to, the authority of Paul or of Alexander at the time when the conspirators who killed Paul were as yet only planning to kill him? And whose power should one have submitted to, Constantine or Nicholas, when Nicholas accepted the power from Constantine?

All history is the history of one power balanced against another, as well in Russia as in all other countries. More-

[1] Sophia of Anhalt, married under the name of Catherine to Peter III., found his brutality unendurable, and is believed to have caused his death. In 1774, a Cossack, Emilian Pugatchof, raised an army of runaway serfs, robbers, and pirates, and proclaimed that he was the Tsar Peter III. The troops sent against him joined him, and people were inclined to believe his claim. Catherine sent Alexandr Bibikof to conquer him. The impostor fled to the southern Volga, but was at last hemmed in and surrendered by his own troops, and was cruelly executed at Moscow. — ED.

over, even not in the time of civil war and the suppression of certain monarchs and the substitution of them by others, in the most peaceful times, it was necessary to submit to Arakcheyef who had usurped the power, or to strive to overturn him and persuade the Tsar of the inability of his ministers. Men do not dispose of supreme power, but of its servants; must one submit to these servants when their demands are evidently wicked and harmful?

So that, however much we might wish to submit to authority, it is impossible, since there is no one definite earthly power, and all earthly powers totter, change, and are at war with one another. How and where is any power genuine? And so what power shall one submit to?

But besides the fact that the power which demands submission to itself is doubtful, and we may not know whether it is genuine or not, this dubious power demands of us no equal, no harmless actions, such as the building of pyramids, temples, palaces, or even the service of the powerful ones of this world and satisfying their whims and luxuries. It might be possible to do that.

But this questionable power demands of us the thing most terrible to man — murder, the preparation for it, the acknowledgment of our readiness for it; demands an action which is clearly contrary to the law of God and therefore destroys the soul. Can I, on account of submission to the accidental, vacillating, contradictory human power, forget the demands of the one power of God which is so clearly and unquestionably known to me, and thus destroy my soul?

"One must submit to the authorities."

"Yes, one most submit to the authorities," say I also, "only not to the authority of an emperor, a king, a president, a parliament, or their appointed chiefs, whom I don't know and whom I have nothing in common with, but to the authority of God, whom I do know, and with whom I live, from whom I received my soul, and to whom I shall render up my soul to-morrow."

It is said, "There will be misfortunes if we do not submit to the authorities."

And this is the truth if by "authority" is meant genuine authority, and not human deception, which is called power, authority. These misfortunes exist, and terrible, horrible misfortunes which we shall experience for the precise reason that we do not submit to the power of God, — the one that is free from doubt, that has been revealed to us both in the Scriptures and in our hearts. We say: Our misfortunes consist in this, that the rich and the idler flourish, and the poor and industrious go to the wall; in this, that the people are deprived of land, and therefore must work like galley slaves in factories, making things which are of no use to them; in this, that the people get intoxicated on the vodka which the government sells to them; in this, that young men go as soldiers, become dissipated, carry diseases, and are separated from a simple life of labor; in this, that the rich sit on the judgment-seat and the poor lie in prisons; in this, that the people are stupefied in schools and churches, and functionaries and the clergy are rewarded for it by money taken from the people; in this, that all the energies of the people — men and money — are expended in wars and on the army, and this army is put into the hands of leaders, who, by means of it, suppress everything that is not consonant with their advantage.

These misfortunes are terrible. But what is the source of them? And on what are they based?

Simply on the fact that men do not submit to the one true power and its law which is inscribed on their hearts, but submit to artificial human regulations which they call the law. If men submitted to the one true power of God and His law, they would not take upon themselves the obligation of killing their fellow-men, they would not go as soldiers, and they would not contribute money for the support and hire of the army.

And if there were no army, there would be none of those cruelties and injustices which it entails. Only by means of the army can one establish and support that order, whereby all the land is in the hands of those that do not work on it, while those that work on it are de-

prived of it; only by means of the army could they take away the labors of the poor and give them to the rich; only by means of the army could they intentionally stupefy the people, and deprive them of the possibility of true enlightenment.

The army consists of soldiers — we ourselves are the soldiers! If we refuse to be soldiers, there will be nothing of the sort.

The position of people is now such that nothing can change except obedience to a true, and not a false, authority.

"But this new state of things without an army, without government, will be many times worse than that in which we now are," is the reply to this.

"Worse for whom?" I ask. "For those that are now in authority, for one one-hundredth of the whole people? In truth, for this part of the people it will be worse. But not for the working population, deprived of land and the products of their labor, simply because for these nine-tenths of the people their position cannot be worse than what it is now."

But by what right do we suppose that the position of the people will be worse off from the fact that they become obedient to the law against murder, revealed to them by God, and put into their hearts? Why, to say that every thing in this world will become worse, if the men in it obey the law which was given to them by God for their guidance in this world, is equivalent to saying that it would be worse if men would use a given machine, not according to their fancy, but in accordance with the direction for its use given by the one who selected and set up the machine.

There was a time when humanity lived like the wild beasts, and every one took for his own life all he could, robbing any one else of what he wanted, slaying and slaughtering his neighbors.

Then came the time when men coalesced into societies, into kingdoms, and began to divide off into nations, defending themselves from other nations. Men became less beastlike, but nevertheless they considered it not

only possible, but even indispensable, to kill their enemies external and internal.

But now the time is coming, indeed it has already come, when men, according to Christ's words, are entering into a new state of the brotherhood of all men, into that new state long ago foretold by the prophets when all men should be taught of God, should unlearn the art of war, beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, and enter into the kingdom of God, the kingdom of unity and peace.

This state was foretold by the prophets; but Christ's teaching showed how and by whom it could be realized, but especially by brotherly unity, one of the first phenomena of which was to be the annihilation of violence. And the importance of annihilating violence is already recognized by men, and therefore this condition becomes as unavoidable as formerly after the wild state came the monarchical state.

Humanity in our time is passing through the birth-pangs of this approaching kingdom of God, and this travail will infallibly end with birth. But the dawning of this new life does not come of itself; its approach depends on us. We must do it. The kingdom of God is within us.

And in order to bring about the kingdom of God within us, I repeat it, we need no special intellectual or physical powers; we need only to be what we are, what God made us — that is to say, reasonable and, above all, righteous beings, heeding the voice of our consciences.

"But that is the very difficulty — men are not reasonable and are not righteous beings," I hear said by those who, in order to have the right to be wicked, declare that the whole human race is bad, and that this is not only the true revealed religious truth, but that taught by experience. "Men are all wicked and unreasonable," they assert, "and therefore it is indispensable that the reasonable and righteous people maintain order."

Now, if all men are lacking in reason and are bad,

where are we to find the reasonable and the good? and if there are such, then how shall we know them? and if we know them, then by what means shall we — and who will be these *we?* — place them at the head of other men? But even if we succeed in placing these exceptionally reasonable and righteous men at the head of the others, then will not these reasonable and righteous men cease to be such if they began to use violence and punish the unreasonable and wicked? And what is most important, you say that in order to prevent certain robbers, thieves, and murderers from maltreating and killing men, you institute courts, the police, the army, which will certainly maltreat and kill men, whose obligation will consist wholly in doing this, and you will induce all men to these institutions. But, you see, by such a method you really exchange a small and suppositious evil for a great universal evil everywhere consummated. In order to resist certain imaginary murderers you compel all men to be really murderers. And so I repeat, that, for the establishment of a fraternal bond among men, there is no need of any special effort, either intellectual or physical, but only to be what God has made us, reasonable and righteous beings, and to act in accordance with these qualities.

It does not fall to each one of us to suffer the experience which Drozhin went through — and if it does befall us, God help us to endure it without changing to Him; but whether we wish it or not, to each one of us, even if we live in a country where there is no military obligation or if we are not accustomed to obey it, to each of us is given the chance, in one way or another, to submit, though it may be in lower and easier forms, to the experience, and of willy-nilly taking his stand on the side of the oppressors and even becoming one of them, or on the side of the oppressed and helping them to bear their trials or even sharing them. To every one of us, even if we do not take a direct part in the persecutions against the latter-day martyrs, such as emperors, ministers, governors, judges, who sign the decrees for the torture of these martyrs, or such a still more direct part

in their tortures as is taken by the jailers, guards, and executioners, — to each one of us, nevertheless, is offered the chance of taking the most active part in these deeds by the judgments which we pronounce upon them in print, in letters, and in conversations.

Often, simply because we are too lazy to think of the meaning of such a phenomenon, simply because we do not wish to disturb our comfort by a lively representation of what these men must experience who, for their justice, candor, and philanthropy, are suffering in jails and exile, we, not thinking of what we are saying, repeat the criticisms which we have heard or read: "What is to be done? They deserve it. These are dangerous fanatics; the government must put an end to such performances," — or words to that effect, which uphold the persecutors, and increase the sufferings of the victims. All of us think a dozen times of some action, of the spending of a certain sum of money, of the breaking up or building of a house; but to speak a word seems so unimportant that we speak for the most part without thinking. But meantime speech is the most significant of all the actions which we can do.

From words grows public opinion. And public opinion alone is higher than all the kings and rulers, directs all the acts of men. And therefore every one of our judgments on behavior like Drozhin's may be the act of God bringing about the coming of the kingdom of God, the brotherhood of men, helping those advanced men who give their lives to bring it about, and it may be an act hostile to God, opposing Him, and coöperating in the torture of those men who are giving themselves to His service.

Drozhin, in his diary, relates the cruel effect on him of such a frivolous and God-opposing word. He tells how in the first period of his imprisonment, when, notwithstanding all his physical sufferings and humiliations, he still continued to experience a joyous, calming consciousness that he was doing his duty, how at this time he was affected by a letter from another revolutionist who, out of *love for him*, urged him to take pity on him-

self, to recant and fulfil the demands of the authorities — take the oath of allegiance and serve in the army.

Evidently this young man, with revolutionary inclinations and according to the ordinary code of the revolutionists fully admitted to their ranks, according to the principle, *the end justifies the means* — all compromises with conscience — did not in the least comprehend the religious feelings which guided Drozhin, and therefore wrote him thoughtlessly, advising him not to destroy himself as a weapon useful for the revolution, and to fulfil all the demands of the authorities. These words, it would seem, ought not to have any special significance, but nevertheless Drozhin writes that they robbed him of his peace of mind and that they made him ill.

And this is comprehensible. All men who move humanity forward, and who are the first and only ones to enter upon that path whereby soon all will be traveling, find it no easy task to get started, but are always met with suffering and inward struggle. The inner voice invites them along the new way; all attachments, traditions, weaknesses, — everything pulls them back. And at such moments of unstable equilibrium every word of encouragement or of discouragement has enormous influence. The most powerful man may be hindered by a child when this man is putting forth all his forces in order to move a weight beyond his strength. Drozhin experienced a terrible despair at these seemingly unimportant words of his friend, and he recovered his calmness only when he received a letter from his friend Izyumchenko, who was joyously bearing the same lot, and who expressed a firm conviction in the propriety of what they were doing.[1]

And, therefore, however far we personally may stand from any action of this kind, we always involuntarily

[1] This friend, for the same kind of refusal to take part in military service, was incarcerated in Kursk, in the city jail. Now, while I am writing this, he is shut up, without permission to see any one whoever, in the strongest *sekret*, or dungeon, of the Moscow forwarding prison, on his way to the government of Tobolsk, where he has been exiled by the emperor's decision. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

participate in them, we have our influence on them by our relation to them, by our judgment of them.

If we take the standpoint of the revolutionary friend, if we reckon that, owing to the fact that maybe sometime, somewhere, we may be in a condition to act on the external conditions of life, we may and must decline the first demands of conscience. We not only do not moderate the sufferings and struggles of men who are rushing to the service of God, but we are also preparing these sufferings of the internal discord for all those that have to decide a dilemma in life. But to decide, this comes to all.

And, therefore, all of us, however far we stand from such events, have a share in them through our opinions and judgments. And an inadvertent, frivolous-spoken word may be the cause of the keenest sufferings for the best people in the world. It is impossible to be too careful of the use of this weapon. *By thy words art thou justified and by thy words art thou condemned.*

But many of us are called to take part in such events, not by words alone, but also far more directly. I refer to the clerks who, in one way or another, take part in those hopeless persecutions which only strengthen the movement, such as the government institutes against men like Drozhin. I speak of the participants in these persecutions, beginning with the emperor, the ministers, the judges, the procurers, down to the jailers and guards who torture these martyrs. Here all of you, participants in these persecutions, know that this man whom you are torturing is not only no criminal, but an exceptionally good man, that he is tortured because he wishes with all the forces of his soul to be good; you know simply that he is young, that he has friends, a mother, that he loves you and pardons you. And him you may shut up in prison, strip to the skin, starve, deprive of food, drink, sleep, prevent from meeting his relations and friends.

How can you, O emperor, who signed such an ukase; O minister, procurer, prison nachalnik, jailer, sit down to your dinner, knowing that he is lying on a cold floor, that, full of torments, he is weeping over your wrath;

how can you caress your child, how can you think of God, of death which will bring you to Him?

However you may pretend to be the executioners of unchangeable laws, you are simply men, and good men, and you are sorry, and we are sorry for you, and only in this pity and love to one another is our life.

You say need compels us to serve in this capacity. Now you know that is not true. You know that there is no poverty, that the word is conventional, that what is poverty for you is luxury for another; you know that you can find another service — one in which you will not have to persecute people, especially such people! You see just as the prophets were persecuted, then Christ, then His disciples, so always those that love men and lead them straight forward to their good have been, and are still, persecuted. Thus, how can you escape being participants in these persecutions?

It is horrible to torture a bird, an animal. How much more horrible to torture a young man, a good, pure youth, filled with love for his fellows, and wishing them well! It is horrible to be a participant in this deed, and above all to be a participant all vainly — to destroy his body, yourselves, your souls, and at the same time not only fail to stop the accomplishment of the work of bringing in the kingdom of God, but, on the other hand, against your will to assist in its triumph!

It is coming and is already at hand.

Moscow, March 16, 1895.

THE END

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